



SECRET AVENGERS

BY ED BRUBAKER

**THE COMPLETE
COLLECTION**

BRUBAKER
DEODATO
CONRAD
AJA
LARK





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WRITER **ED BRUBAKER**

SECRET AVENGERS #1-4 “SECRET HISTORIES”

MIKE DEODATO JR.
WITH **WILL CONRAD** (#2)
ARTISTS

RAIN BEREDO
COLOR ARTIST

SECRET AVENGERS #5 “SECRET HISTORIES EPILOGUE: THE SECRET LIFE OF MAX FURY”

**DAVID AJA, MICHAEL LARK
& STEFANO GAUDIANO**
ARTISTS

JOSÉ VILLARRUBIA
COLOR ARTIST

SECRET AVENGERS #6-10 “EYES OF THE DRAGON”

MIKE DEODATO JR.
WITH **WILL CONRAD** (#9-10)
ARTISTS

RAIN BEREDO
COLOR ARTIST

SECRET AVENGERS #11-12 “THE TROUBLE WITH JOHN STEELE”

WILL CONRAD
WITH **MIKE DEODATO JR.** (#12)
ARTISTS

RAIN BEREDO
WITH **SOTOCOLOR** (#11)
COLOR ARTISTS

MARKO DJURDJEVIĆ (#1-6)
MIKE DEODATO JR.
& **RAIN BEREDO** (#7-12)
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OUR WORLD
IS OUT OF
CONTROL.

THE 21ST CENTURY
MOVES TOO FAST
AND ITS THREATS
ARE TOO BIG FOR
MOST TO EVEN
ACKNOWLEDGE.

I WORRY ABOUT THE INSANE
VILLAINS IN MASKS AND THE
INSANE DICTATORS WITH
NUCLEAR WEAPONS...

...I MEAN,
I HEARD
THEY HAD THE
BEST OF
EVERYTHING
HERE...

...BUT YOU TWO ARE ENOUGH TO
MAKE *THIS AMERICAN* CONSIDER
RELOCATING...

YOU ARE TOO NICE...
ALL AMERICANS
TOO NICE.

HA...
YOU GOT
THAT RIGHT,
BABY...

...BUT THE THINGS I
WORRY ABOUT MOST
ARE THE THREATS WE
DON'T KNOW ABOUT.

MISTER
BROMLEY.

EVENING,
BOYS...

THE THREATS
THAT HIDE IN
THE SHADOWS.



YOU MUST
BE *IMPORTANT*
MAN, TO HAVE SUCH
GUARDS?

THOSE
TWO? THAT'S
NOTHING...

EVERY ROOM
ON THIS FLOOR HAS
SECURITY FORCES
IN IT.



ROXXON DOESN'T
SEND *SENIOR VPs* TO
THE MIDDLE EAST
WITHOUT AN *ARMY*
OF BACKUP...

THAT'S
GOOD TO
KNOW.



YEP, WE'RE ALL
TUCKED IN SAFE AND
SOUND, LADIES, SO
NOW LET'S...

DO
NOT PAW
AT ME.



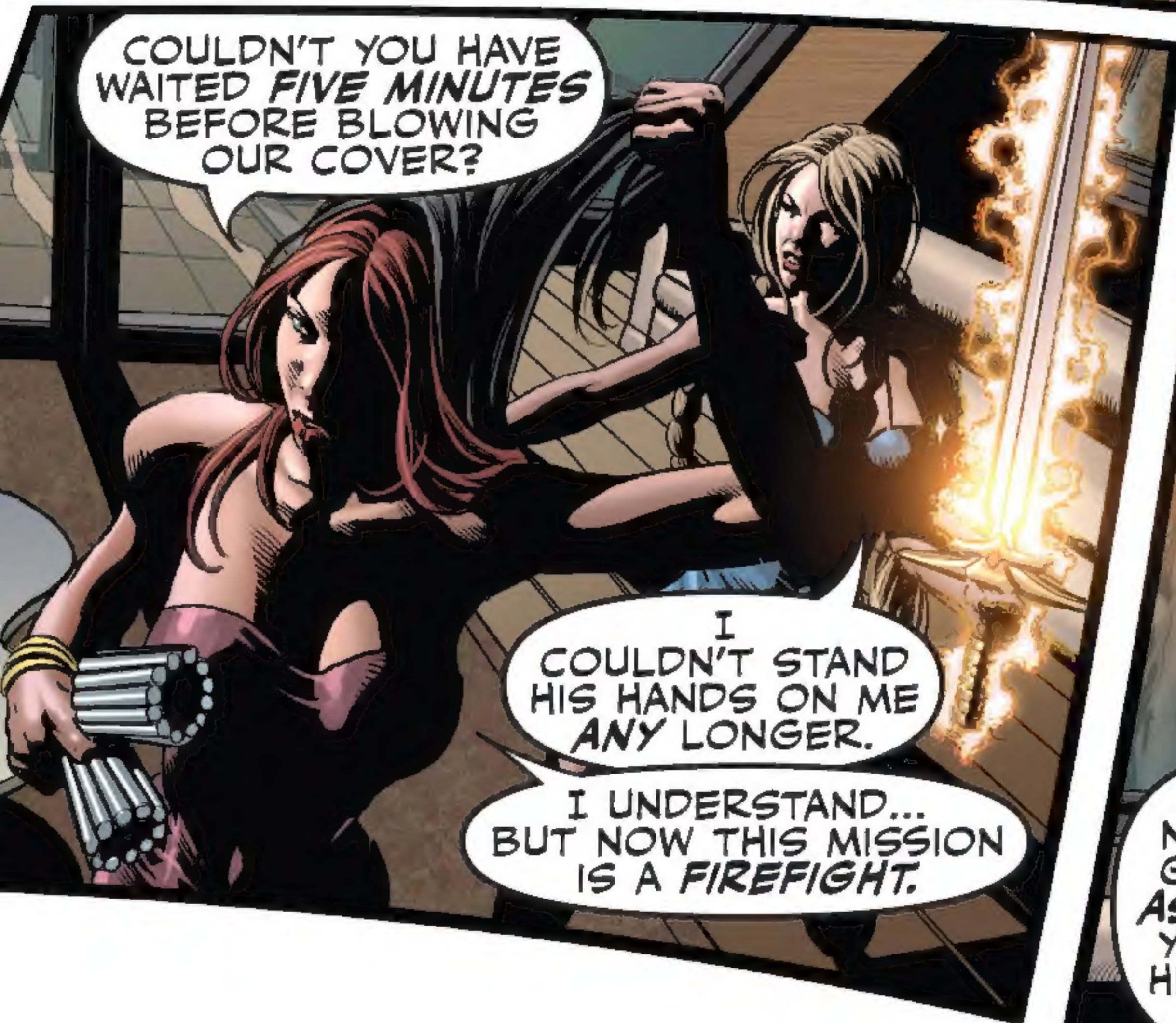
AW, DON'T BE
LIKE THAT...GIVE US
A KISS...

A *KISS*?



A *KISS*?!

IT'S GOING
SOUTH HERE...
EXTRACTION
IN TEN.



VALKYRIE
One-time shield
maiden of Asgard

BLACK WIDOW
Ex-Soviet super-spy

THE TROUBLE WITH
SECRET THREATS,
OF COURSE...

...IS FINDING THEM
BEFORE THEY
BECOME PROBLEMS.

BUT IN A WORLD LIKE THIS,
THAT MOVES SO FAST AND
SO RUTHLESSLY...

...WHERE SO MANY
ARTIFACTS OR
EXPERIMENTS
CAN BE TURNED
INTO W.M.D.'S...

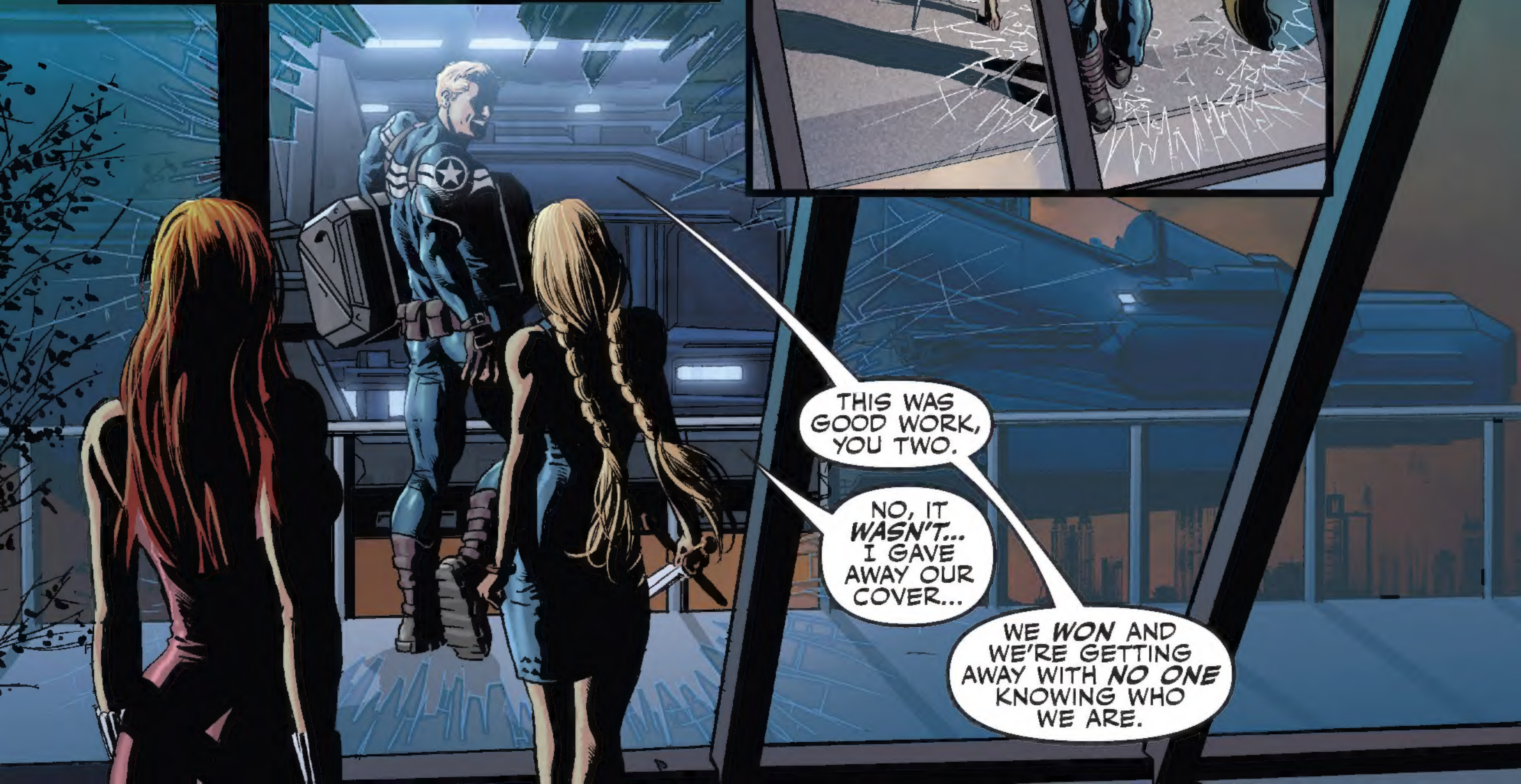
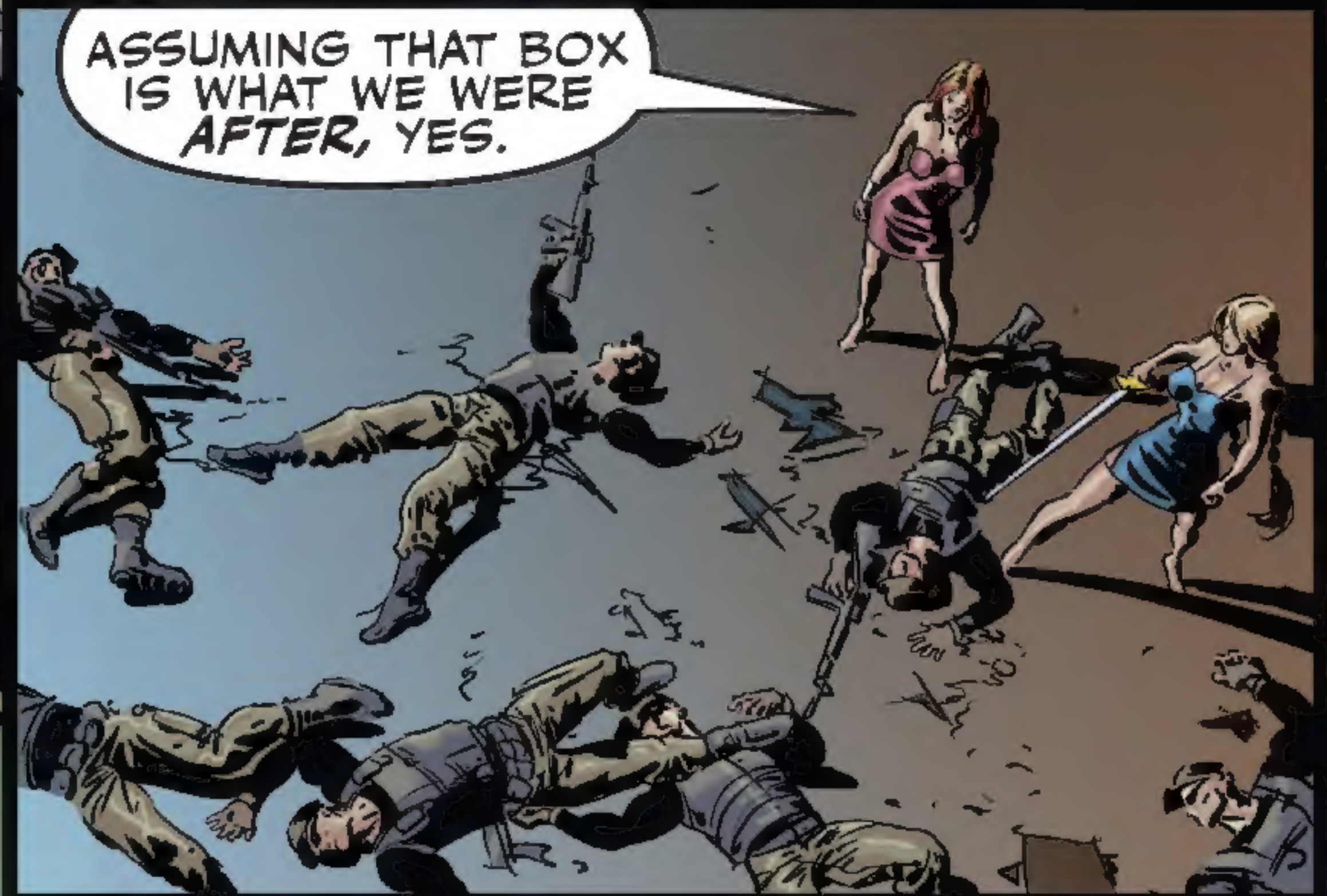
...SOMEONE
HAS TO TACKLE
THIS JOB.

STEVE ROGERS
The first
Captain America

SOMEONE HAS
TO STOP
MANKIND FROM
DESTROYING
ITSELF.

SMASH







THAT'S
GOOD WORK
IN MY BOOK,
VALKYRIE.



WE WERE
TOO LATE,
SIR...

WHAT
DO YOU
MEAN?

SOMEONE
ELSE HAS THE
ARTIFACT.

CAN
YOU TRACK
THEM?



YES SIR...
THEY LEFT A **HEAT
SIGNATURE** A
MILE LONG...

THEN
GET ON IT...
WE CAN'T LOSE
THAT THING
AGAIN...



OKAY,
WE'VE GOT ONE
PROBLEM...

...THIS ISN'T
THE SERPENT
CROWN.

YEAH, I
NOTICED THAT
ALREADY.

SO,
WHAT IS IT,
THEN?

I'M NOT
SURE...
SEEMS
LIKE SOME
KIND OF DISTANT
COUSIN OF THE
SERPENT
CROWN...

BEAST
Mutant and
scientific genius

MAYBE
THEY'RE
PART OF
A SET?

NOW
THERE'S AN IDEA
I'D RATHER NOT
CONTEMPLATE...

NOT UNTIL
WE HAVE TO,
AT LEAST.



ALSO, THESE
TENTACLES ARE...
SHIFTING...OR
UNCOILING...AS IF
IT'S ALIVE.

BUT I
CAN'T **SEE** IT
MOVING. NOT
EVEN WITH
VIDEO.

AS IF IT
MOVES **BETWEEN**
MOMENTS.

DO
WHATEVER
YOU CAN,
HANK...

...AND IF
I HAVEN'T SAID
IT BEFORE, IT'S
GOOD TO HAVE
YOU BACK ON
THE TEAM.

ONCE AN
AVENGER AND ALL
THAT, RIGHT?

ABSOLUTELY.

OH,
AND STEVE,
ONE THING THAT
WOULD **REALLY**
HELP...

...IS
FINDING OUT
WHERE **ROXXON**
GOT THIS
THING.

WHAT'S OUR ETA?

WE'RE TEN MINUTES OUT. I'LL KEEP US IN *STEALTH* ONCE WE'RE PARKED...

GOOD.

SHARON CARTER
Ex-S.H.I.E.L.D. agent

YOU'RE REALLY *TAKING* TO THIS, RUNNING A *SHADOW OPS* TEAM.

IT'S ACTUALLY A LOT LIKE HOW *THE INVADERS* WORKED, BACK IN THE WAR...BUT I *DO* LIKE IT...

...WITH EVERYTHING THAT'S HAPPENED, IT'S NICE TO BE OUT OF THE *SPOTLIGHT* BUT STILL DOING *GOOD WORK*.

I ALWAYS SAID YOU'D MAKE A GREAT SPY... ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU'VE GOT *ME* RUNNING YOUR TACTICAL OPERATIONS.

I WOULDN'T HAVE EVEN *TRIED THIS* WITHOUT YOU, SHARON...YOU SAVED MY *LIFE*...

FUNNY, I SEEM TO REMEMBER IT *DIFFERENTLY*, COMMANDER ROGERS...



...AN' MURPHY'S LIKE, DUDE, YOU *DON'T* WANT TO MESS...

MURPHY'S NOT TOUGH.

THIS DUDE DOESN'T KNOW THAT. HE LOOKS TOUGH.

TRUE... TRUE...

SO, THEN WHAT HAPPENED?

DANNY...?

MOON KNIGHT
Former mercenary soldier

UUKKKE

AW, GOD--

SORRY, NO WALKIE-TALKIES ON THIS TOUR...

ANT-MAN
Former Thunderbolt



YOU DISABLED ALL THE SECURITY CAMERAS? YOU'RE CERTAIN?

WOULD EVERYONE STOP TREATING ME LIKE AN INCOMPETENT, PLEASE?

AND YOU KNOW WHERE TO GO?



YEP. THE NEW HELMET'S GOT A GPS MAP OF THIS PLACE ALL LOADED UP.



BUT THIS IS NOT WHAT I EXPECTED WHEN I GOT ASKED TO BE AN AVENGER, Y'KNOW?

BREAKING AND ENTERING...



TWO WEEKS AGO



TEAMS AND ME, WE DON'T WORK... TOO MANY VOICES...

THIS WON'T BE LIKE THAT. IT'S A STRIKE FORCE, OFF THE BOOKS.

YOU'D BE ON CALL, USING YOUR SKILLS AS NEEDED.



I DON'T
KNOW...

I'VE GOT
A LOT ON MY
PLATE RIGHT
NOW.



YOU'RE
TRYING
TO CHANGE
YOUR WAYS.
I *GET*
THAT.

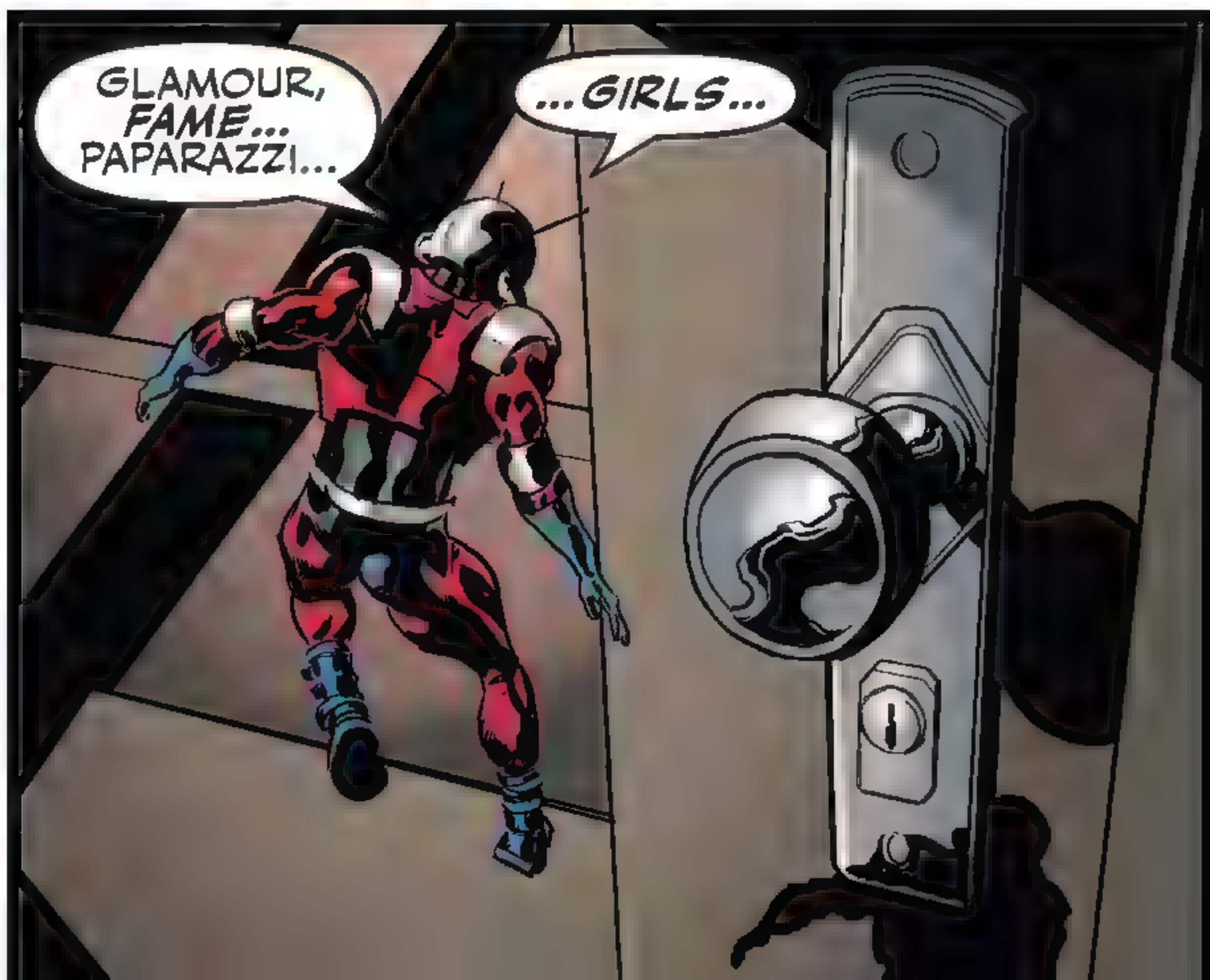


SO...
LET ME
HELP.



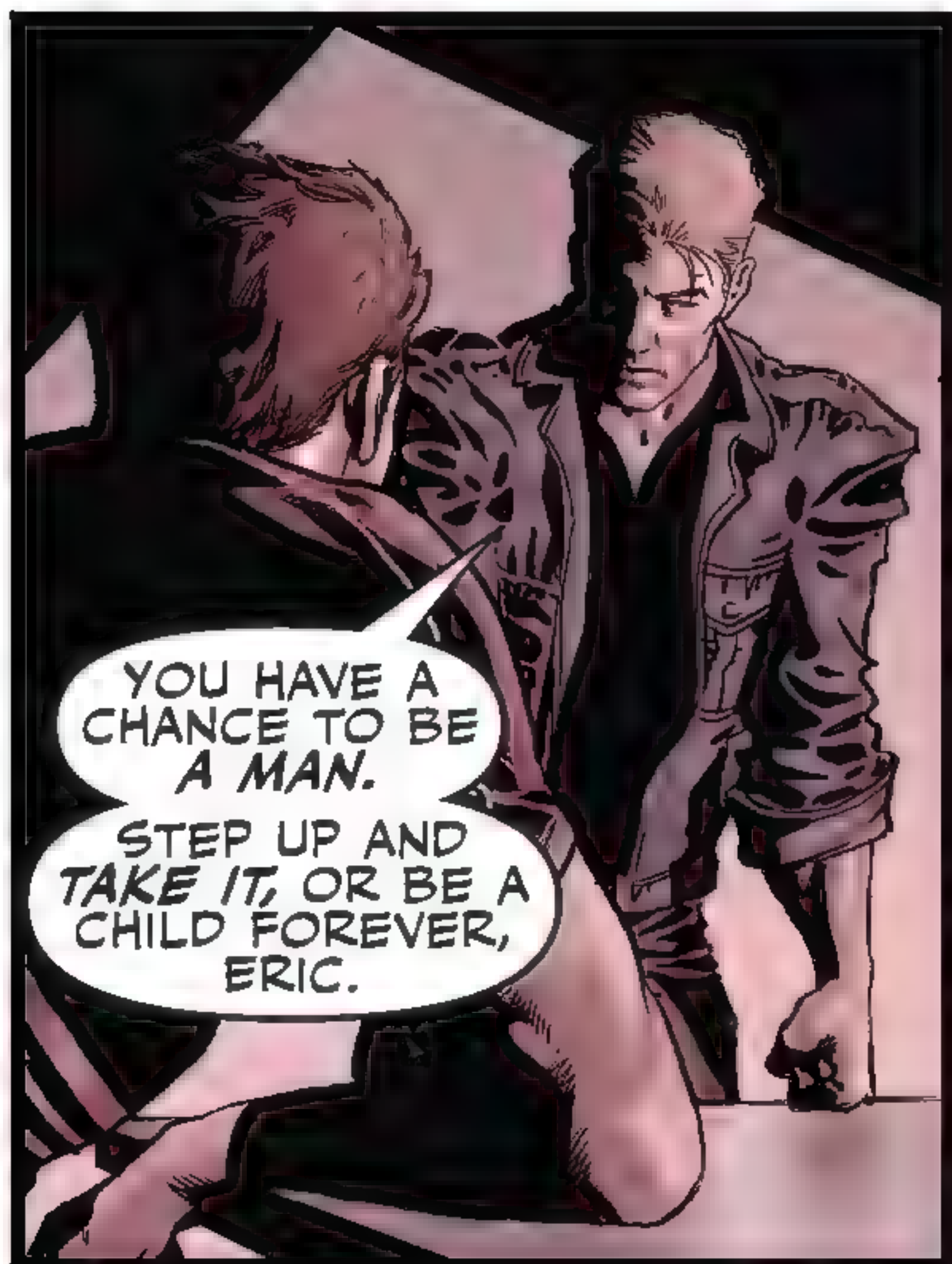
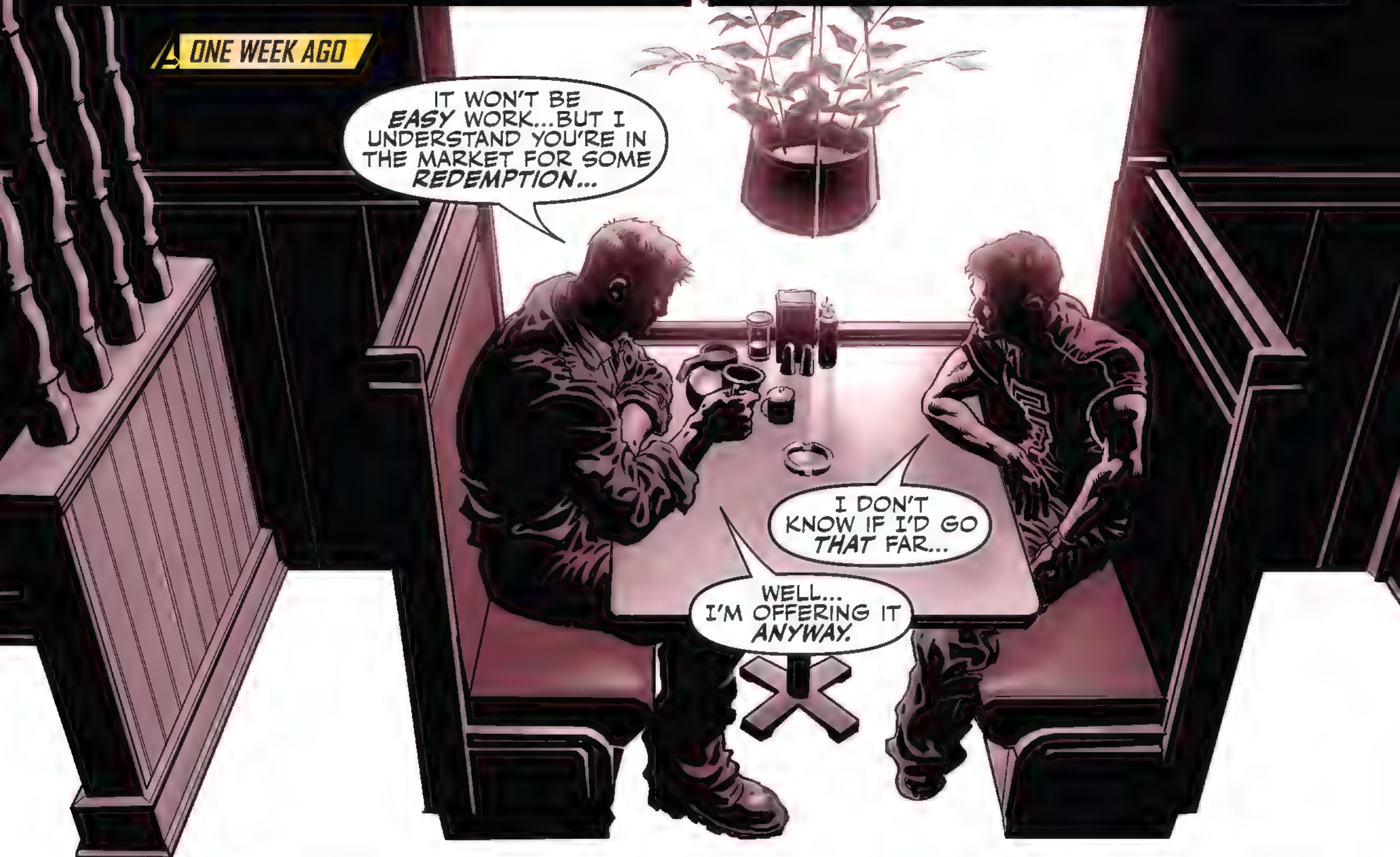
WHAT
DID YOU
EXPECT,
ANT?

I DON'T
KNOW...



GLAMOUR,
FAME...
PAPARAZZI...

...GIRLS...





HURRY,
DAMN IT...

SORRY, IT'S
LIKE TRYING TO
FIND A NEEDLE IN A
NEEDLE FACTORY
IN HERE...

I DON'T
KNOW THAT
EXPRESSION.



I MEAN
EVERYTHING
LOOKS EXACTLY
THE SAME...



OH, WAIT...
NEVER MIND.

HERE
WE GO...



CRESCENT
WRENCH TO
SKY KING, WE'RE
TAPPED IN.

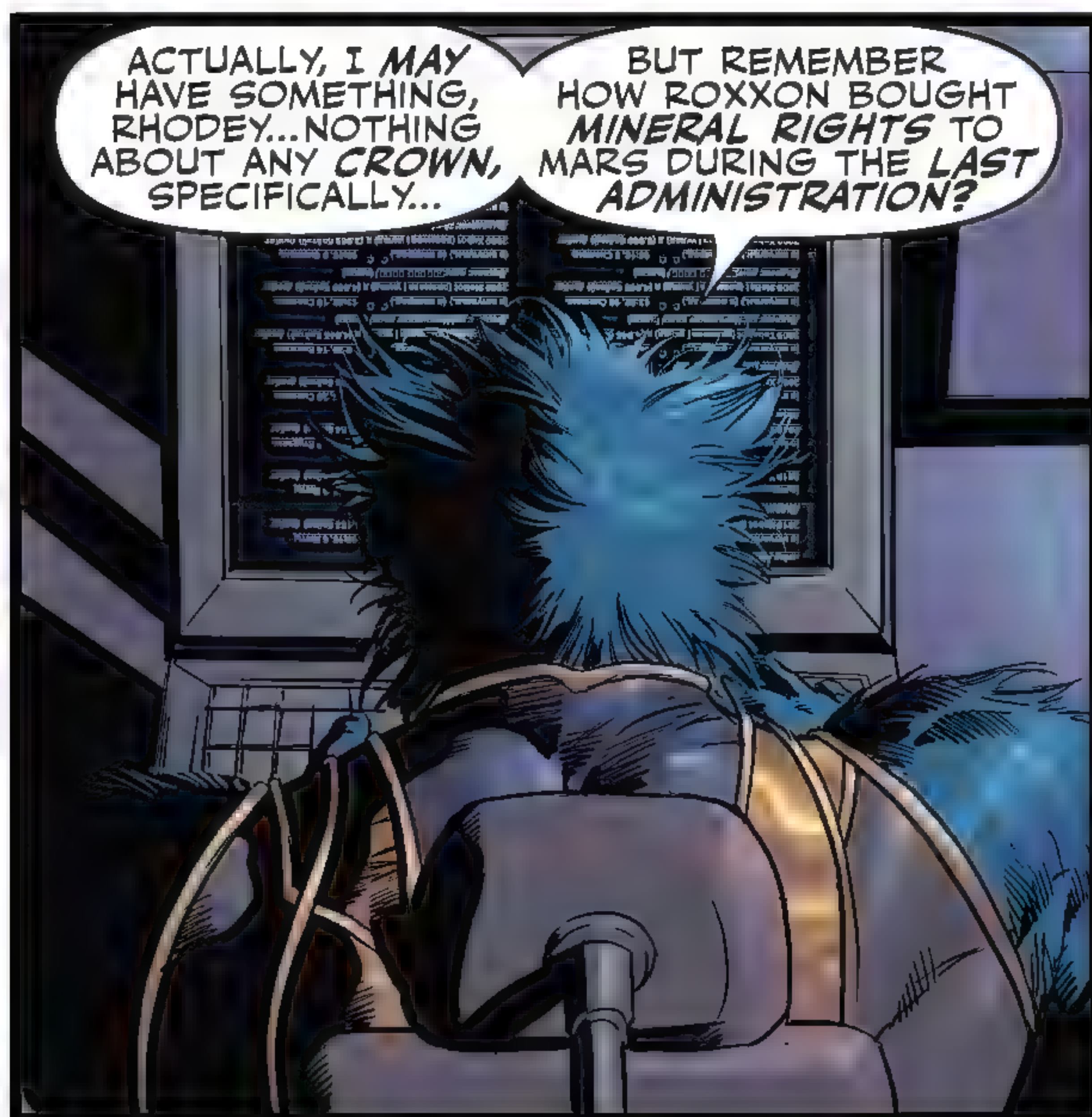
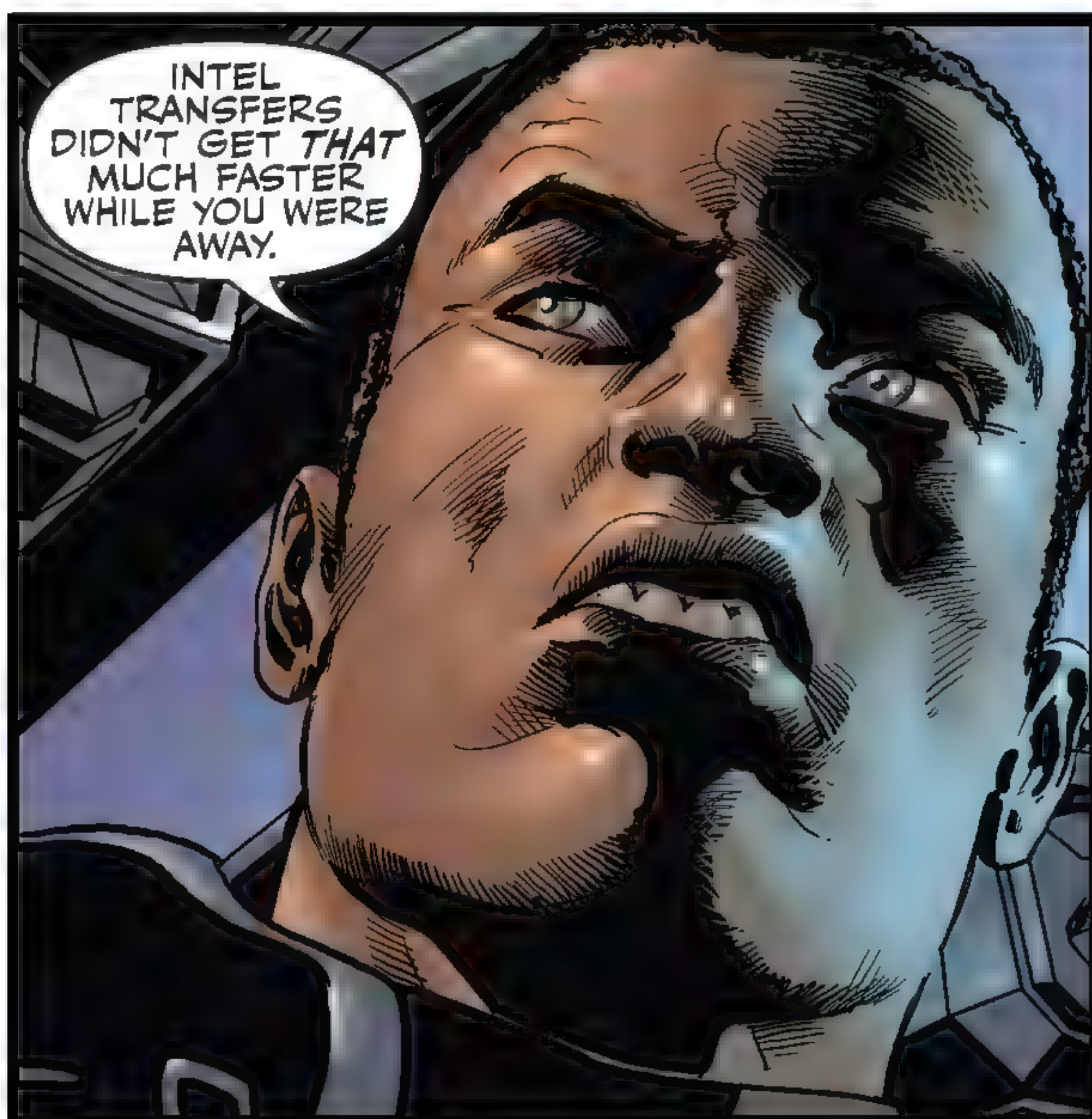
ALL
RIGHT, WE'RE
GOOD...



...GET
OUT OF
THERE,
GUYS.



WAR MACHINE
Armored soldier,
one-time Iron Man





HANG ON...
LET ME CHECK
SOMETHING IN
A *DIFFERENT*
DATABASE...

AMAZING...
THE *HUBRIS* TO
SELL MINERAL
RIGHTS TO
ANOTHER
PLANET...

THAT'S THE
21ST CENTURY
FOR YOU...



THE FUTURE
IS *HERE*, AND
IT'S *FOR SALE*
TO THE HIGHEST
BIDDER.

OKAY,
YEAH, THIS IS
WEIRD.

ALL THE
ROXXON *EMPLOYEES*
FROM THE MARS DIG HAVE
VANISHED FROM THEIR
PAYROLL LOGS.



NO
RECORD OF THEM
BEING *LET GO*...
NO REPORT OF AN
ACCIDENT AT THE
DIG SITE...

THESE
PEOPLE SIMPLY
DON'T EXIST
ANYMORE
ACCORDING TO
ROXXON.



OKAY...
I'LL HAVE
SOMEONE
CHECK
INTO IT.

YOU HAVE
SOMEONE ON THIS
TEAM WHO CAN JUST
CHECK OUT *MARS*
FOR US?



OF
COURSE
I DO...

“...WHAT KIND OF OPERATION DID YOU *THINK* I WAS RUNNING, RHODEY?”



WE HAVE THEIR CRAFT *IN SIGHT*, SIR... ALL INDICATIONS ARE THAT THE ITEM IS STILL *ONBOARD*.

WHAT ARE YOUR ORDERS?

STAY ON THEM...



I'LL BE THERE SOON TO EVALUATE OUR NEXT MOVE.

YES SIR.

TWO NIGHTS LATER

FORMER H.A.M.M.E.R. STORAGE FACILITY

THANKS FOR
ASSEMBLING SO
QUICKLY...

...I KNOW
WHEN I CALLED
ON ALL OF YOU TO
JOIN THIS TEAM,
I TOLD YOU WHAT
OUR MISSION
WAS...

...STEALTH TACTICS
AND *PREEMPTIVE*
INTERVENTION.

WE GO WHERE
WE'RE *NEEDED* AND
PERFORM *SURGICAL*
STRIKES.



BECAUSE WHEN **OSBORN** WAS RUNNING THINGS, UNSURPRISINGLY, A LOT OF THINGS FELL APART.

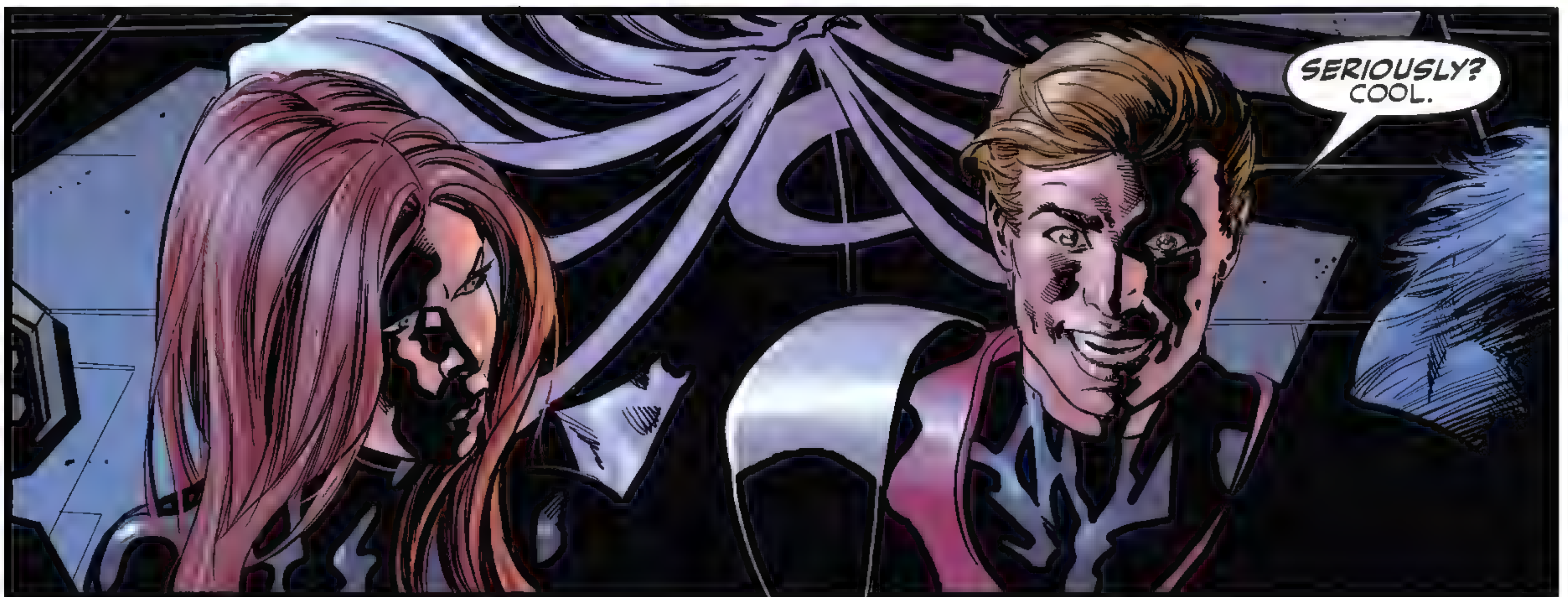
PROJECT: PEGASUS WAS PRACTICALLY LOOTED WHEN HE SHUT IT DOWN, FOR EXAMPLE.



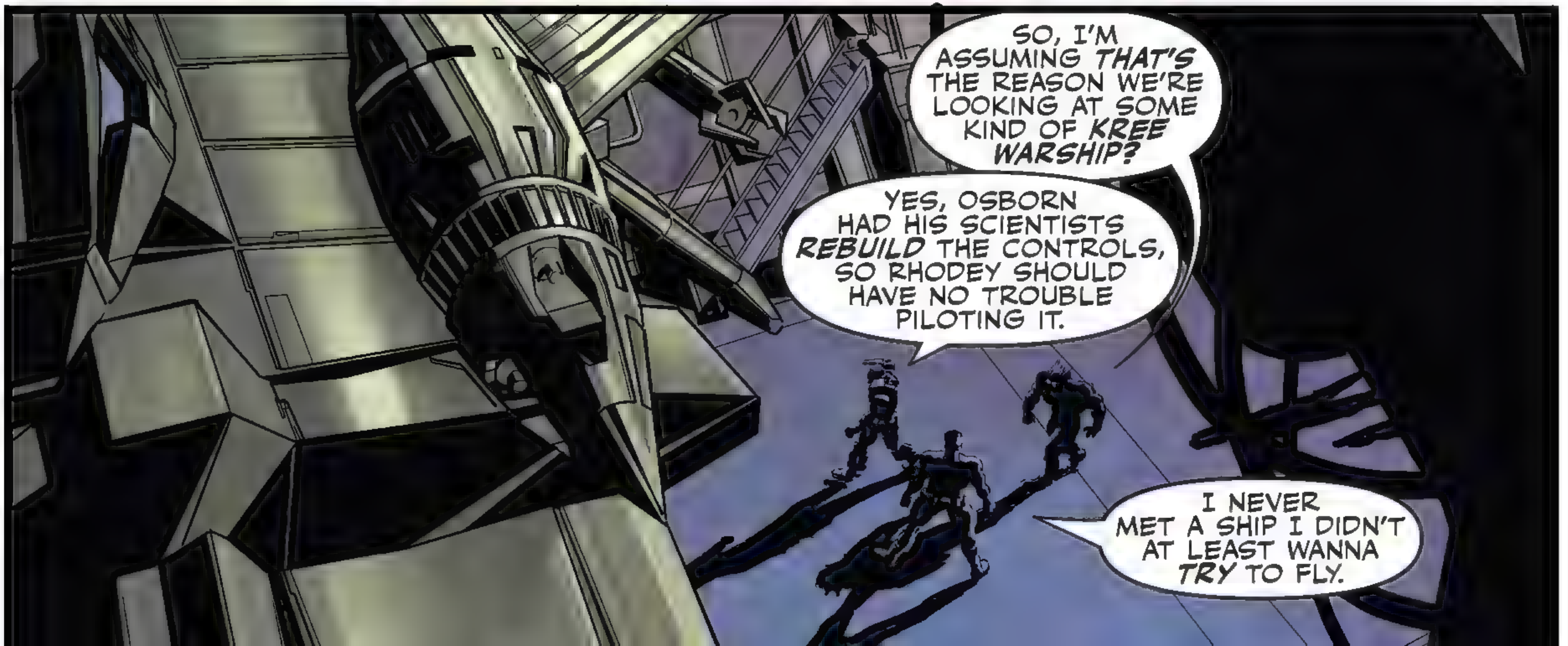
THAT'S OUR **PRIMARY OBJECTIVE...** BUT TONIGHT WE HAVE A **DIFFERENT MISSION.**

I DIDN'T EXPECT TO HAVE TO CALL YOU ALL TOGETHER THIS SOON...

...BUT WE HAVE TO GO TO **MARS.**



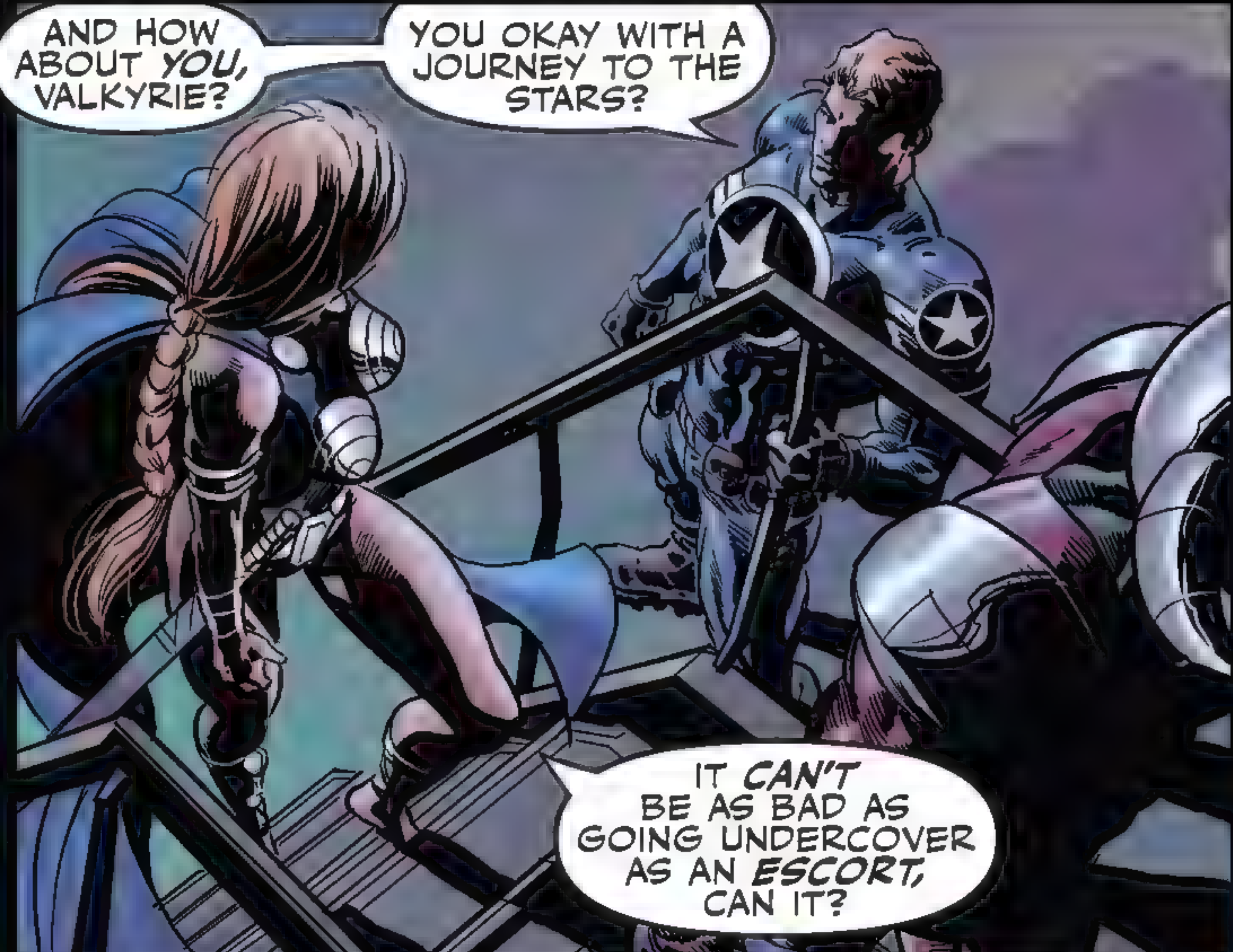
SERIOUSLY? COOL.



SO, I'M ASSUMING **THAT'S** THE REASON WE'RE LOOKING AT SOME KIND OF **KREE WARSHIP?**

YES, **OSBORN** HAD HIS SCIENTISTS **REBUILD** THE CONTROLS, SO **RHODEY** SHOULD HAVE NO TROUBLE PILOTING IT.

I NEVER MET A SHIP I DIDN'T AT LEAST WANNA TRY TO FLY.



AND HOW ABOUT YOU, VALKYRIE?

YOU OKAY WITH A JOURNEY TO THE STARS?

IT *CAN'T* BE AS BAD AS GOING UNDERCOVER AS AN *ESCORT*, CAN IT?



I DON'T KNOW, BUT WE CAN CERTAINLY USE SOMEONE WITH YOUR *POWER SET* ALONG, EITHER WAY.



SO, WHAT'S GOING ON, STEVE?

I THOUGHT YOU SAID YOU HAD SOMEONE *CHECKING* ON THE MARS THING?

I DID... AND I LOST *CONTACT* WITH HIM THIS MORNING.

"THIS IS A
RESCUE
MISSION."

MARS

THAT MORNING

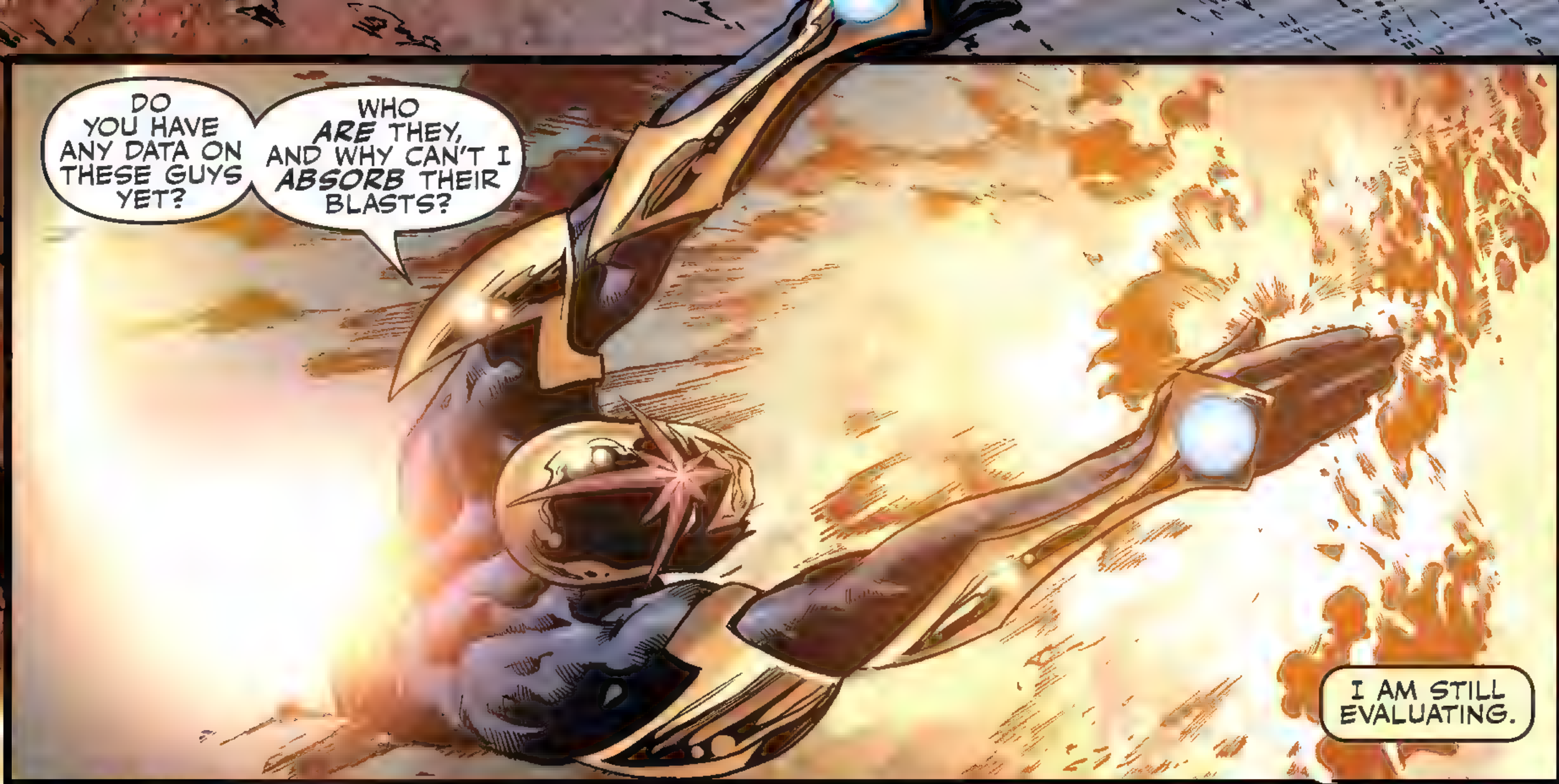
IT'LL BE
NO BIG DEAL,
RICH...JUST LEND
A HAND ONCE IN
A WHILE...

BE AN
AVENGER...
JOIN THE BIG
LEAGUES...

ARE YOU
SPEAKING TO
ME, RICHARD?

NO,
WORLDWIND...
I'M MOCKING
MYSELF...

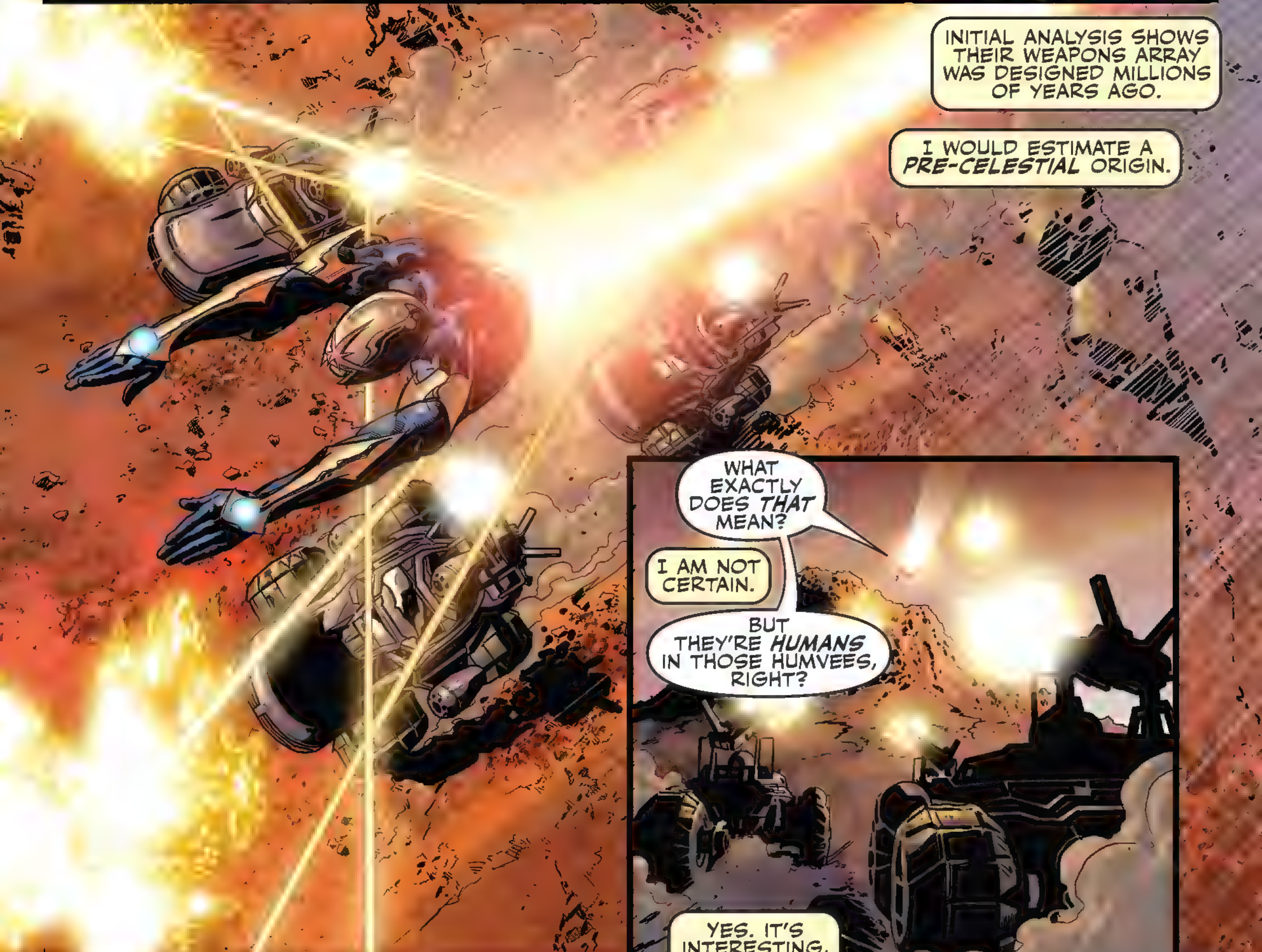
...FOR
THINKING THIS
WAS GOING TO BE A
SIMPLE *RECON*
MISSION.



DO
YOU HAVE
ANY DATA ON
THESE GUYS
YET?

WHO
ARE THEY,
AND WHY CAN'T I
ABSORB THEIR
BLASTS?

I AM STILL
EVALUATING.



INITIAL ANALYSIS SHOWS
THEIR WEAPONS ARRAY
WAS DESIGNED MILLIONS
OF YEARS AGO.

I WOULD ESTIMATE A
PRE-CELESTIAL ORIGIN.



WHAT
EXACTLY
DOES **THAT**
MEAN?

I AM NOT
CERTAIN.

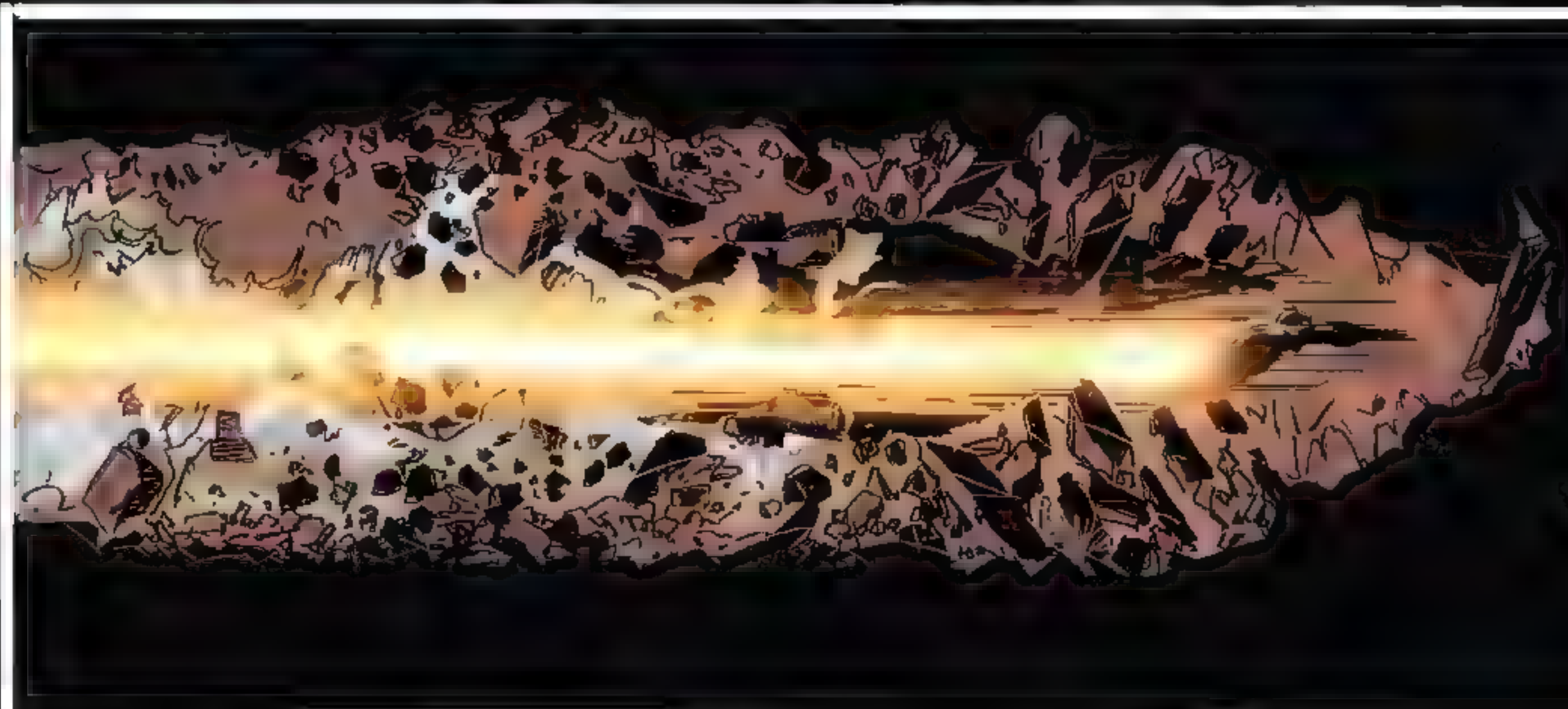
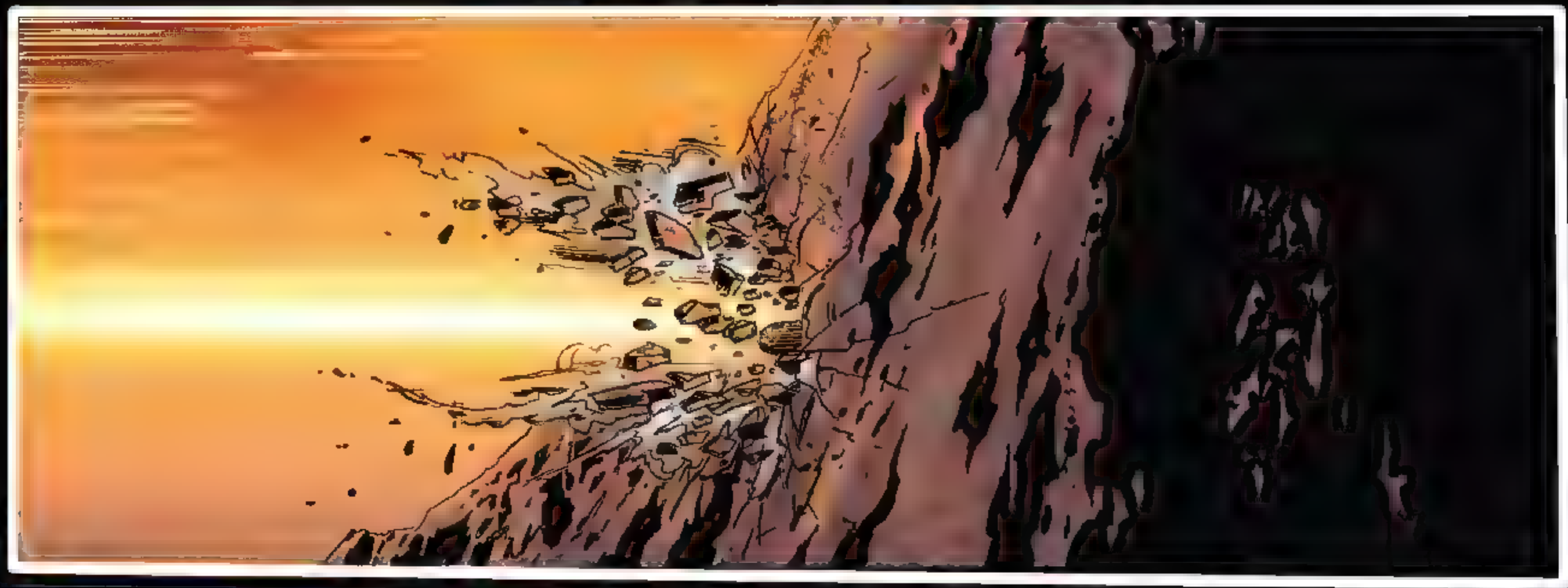
BUT
THEY'RE **HUMANS**
IN THOSE HUMVEES,
RIGHT?

YES. IT'S
INTERESTING,
ISN'T IT?



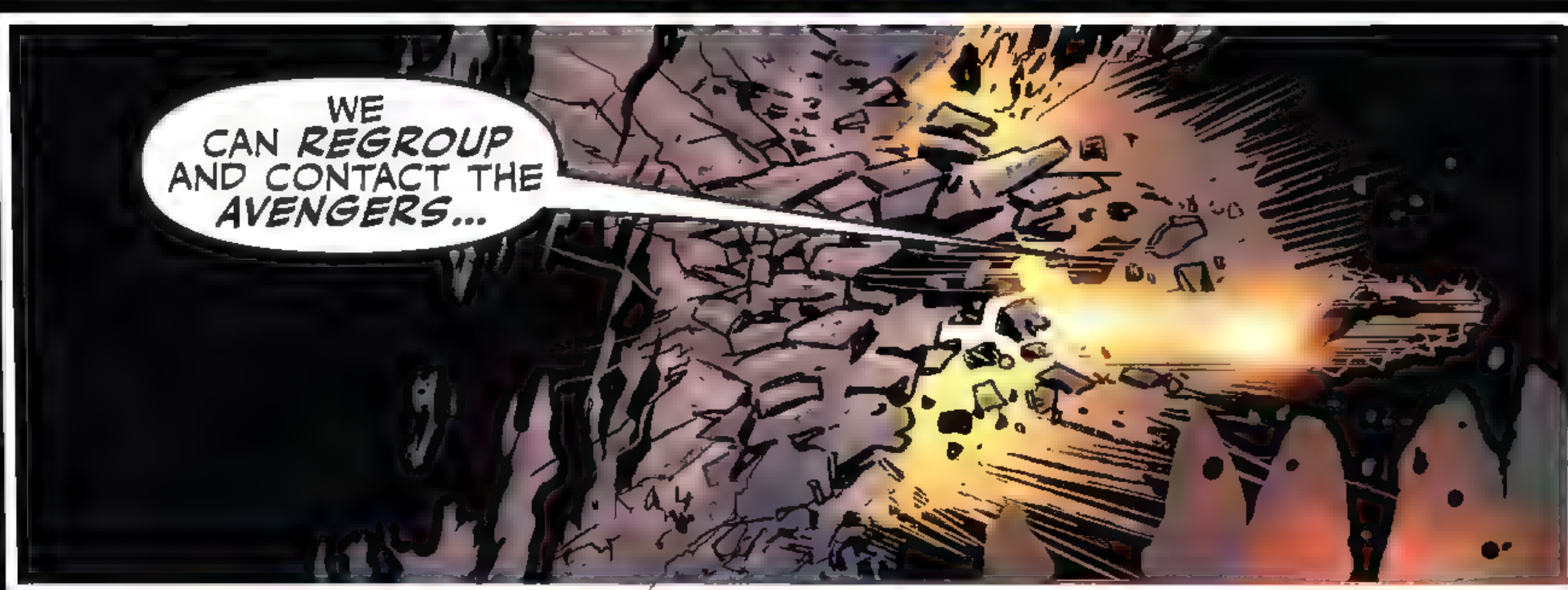
GLAD
ONE OF US IS
AMUSED...

BUT I
COULD USE
A **BREAK** FROM
THE CONSTANT
BARRAGE.



RICHARD, THERE
APPEARS TO BE
AN ARTIFICIALLY
FORMED CAVERN
THREE HUNDRED
FEET AHEAD.

GOOD.



WE
CAN *REGROUP*
AND CONTACT THE
AVENGERS...

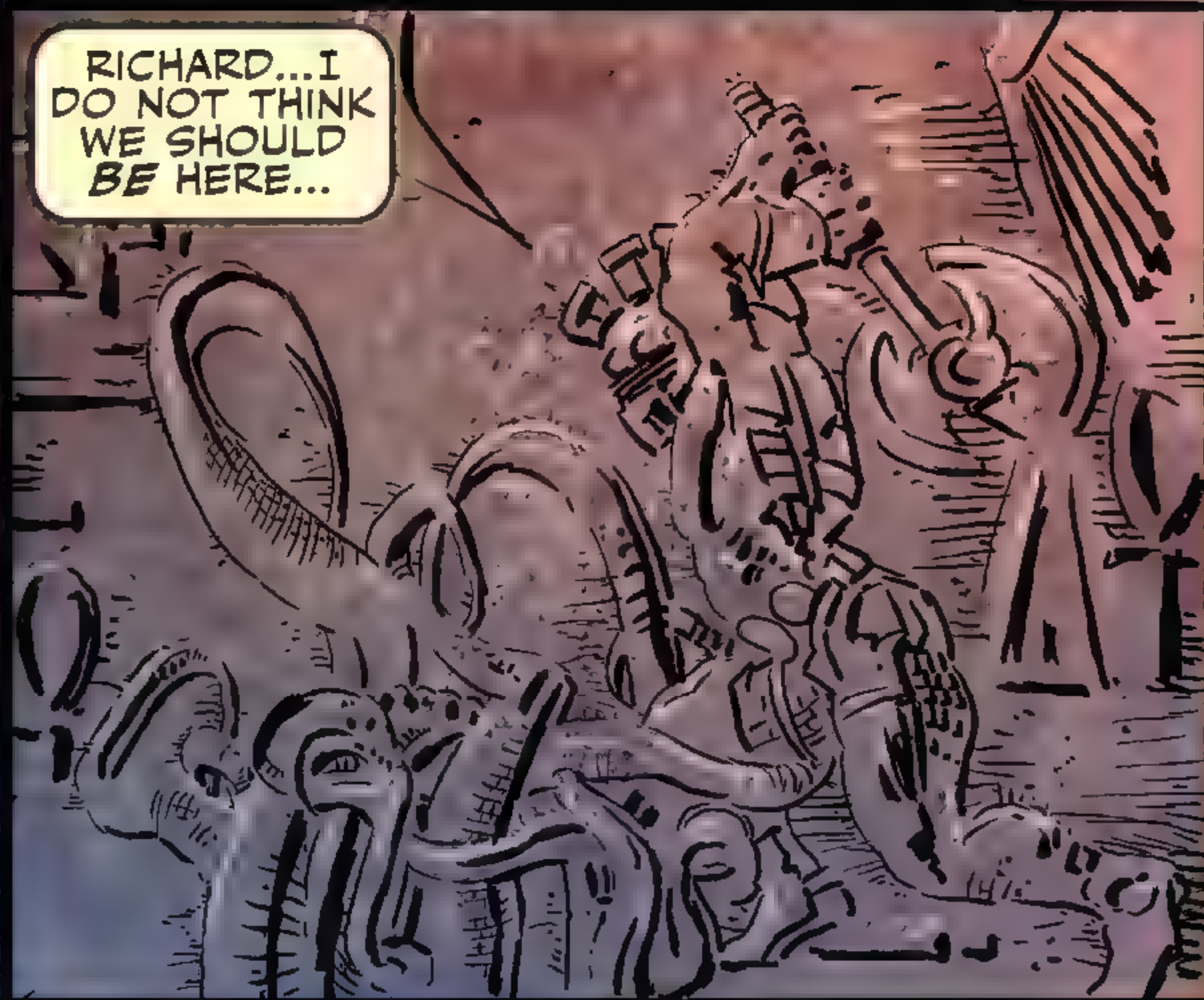
...AND...

...WHAT THE
HELL...?





WHAT IS THAT...?



RICHARD... I DO NOT THINK WE SHOULD BE HERE...



THE ENERGY READINGS ARE NOT--

SHUT UP, WORLD MIND...



...JUST QUIT TALKING FOR ONCE.

RICHARD! STOP!



STOP!

TWENTY-FOUR HOURS LATER



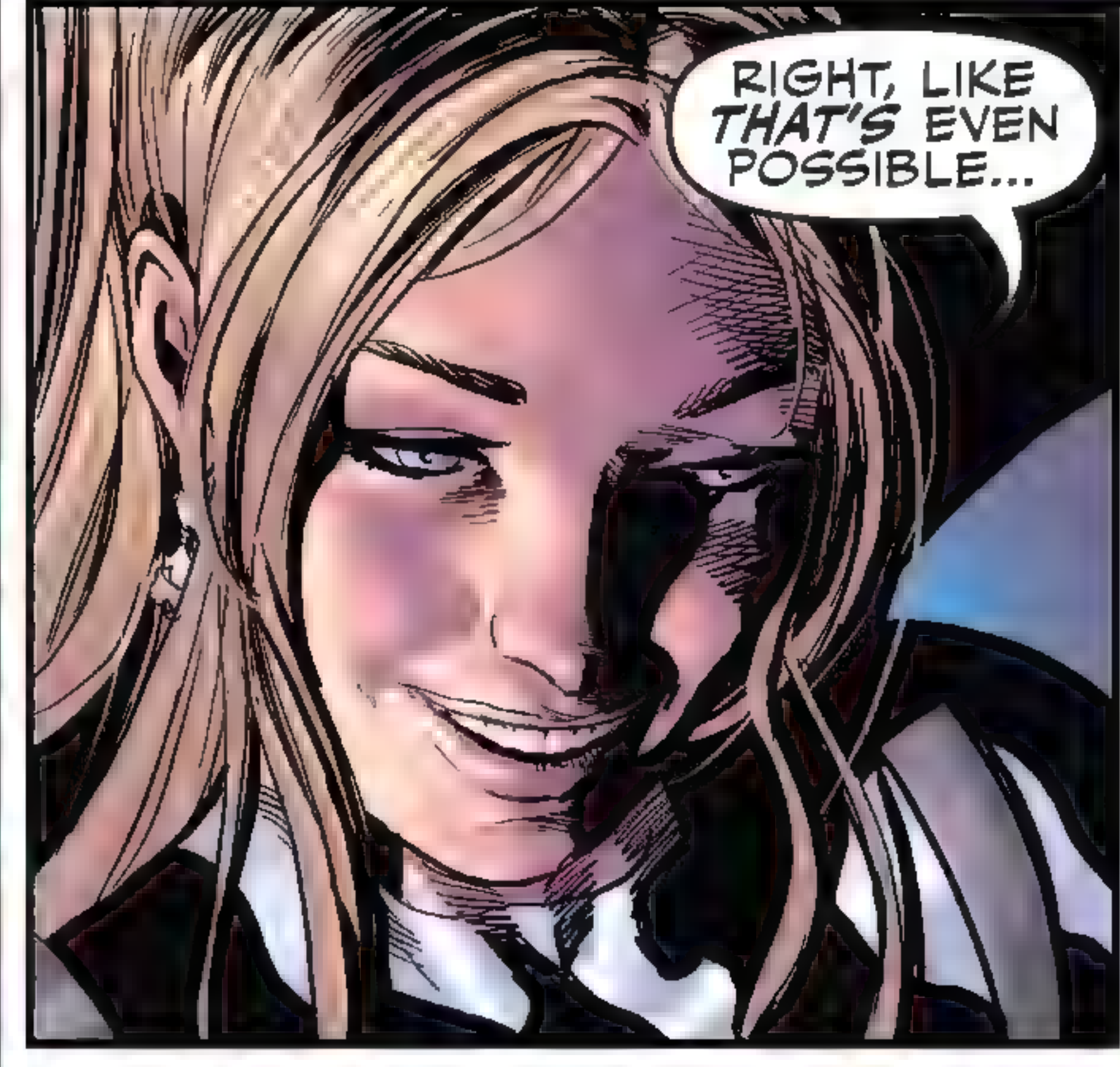
--TO ARRIVE TOMORROW, THEN WE CAN BEGIN **SEARCH AND RESCUE...**

I SHOULD HAVE GONE WITH YOU. I DON'T LIKE THIS.



SOMEONE HAD TO STAY AND RUN THE **SHOP...**

...AND KEEP AN EYE ON MARIA HILL AND VICTORIA HAND.



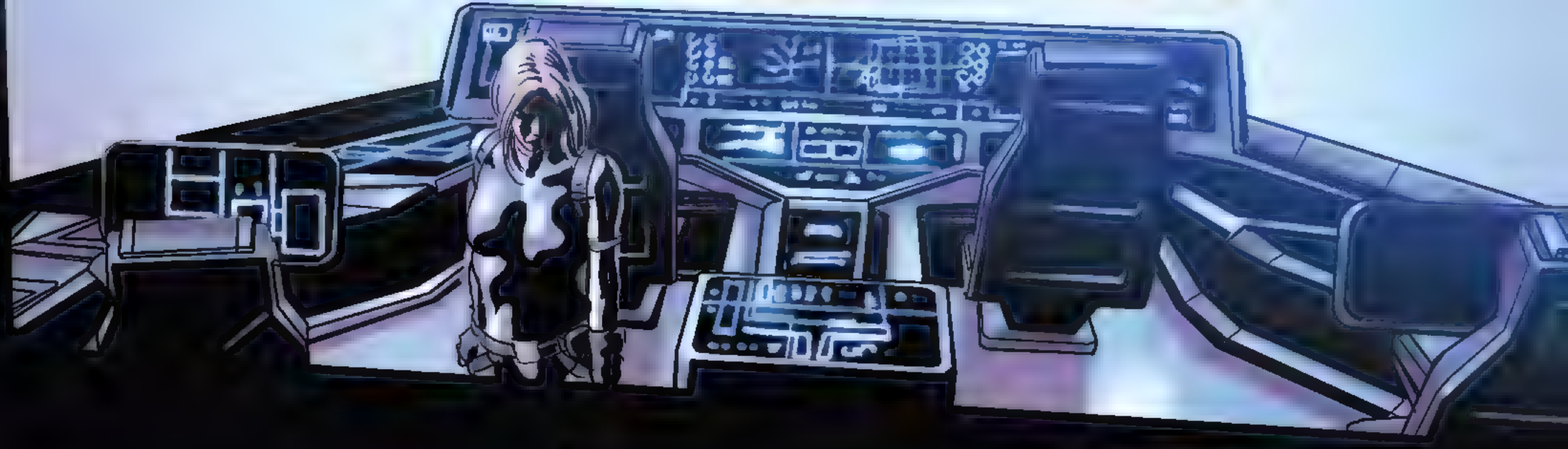
RIGHT, LIKE THAT'S EVEN POSSIBLE...



BE SAFE, I'LL CONTACT YOU WHEN WE LAND.

YOU BE SAFE.

ALWAYS.



SORRY,
BABE...DIDN'T
WANNA *HURT*
YA...

...BUT YOU
GOT SOMETHIN'
THAT BELONGS
TO THE *SHADOW*
COUNCIL...



SECRET HISTORIES



SECRET AVENGERS ROVING H.Q.

NEXT MORNING

I WAKE UP ANGRY

I WAKE UP WITH A SPLITTING HEADACHE, TOO, BUT MOSTLY I WAKE UP ANGRY.

NO... NO WAY THEY HACKED MY SECURITY FEEDS...

SHARON CARTER
Former AGENT 13
of S.H.I.E.L.D.

...BUT... THEY GOT INTO OUR SHIP, WHICH SHOULD HAVE BEEN IMPOSSIBLE, SO...

WAIT.

DAMN IT.

THEY'RE IN STEALTH GEAR.
JUST LIKE S.H.I.E.L.D. USED

ANY CAMERAS SEE NOTHING BUT A DIGITAL BLUR

SO...WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO, SHARON?

WAIT AROUND UNTIL STEVE REPORTS IN FROM SPACE?

OR TRY TO TRACK WHOEVER KNOCKED YOU OUT AND STOLE A HIGHLY DANGEROUS ARTIFACT?

...C'MON, HANK...PLEASE TELL ME YOU DID SOMETHING...

YES.

THAT CROWN OF TENTACLES OR WHATEVER IT IS HAS A UNIQUE ENERGY SIGNATURE THAT BEAST MANAGED TO GET A LOCK ON...

I WOULDN'T EXACTLY CALL IT AN EASY TRAIL TO FOLLOW.

ALL RIGHT, YOU SHADOWY BLURS...

...BUT AT LEAST IT GIVES ME SOMEWHERE TO START.

...YOU MESSED WITH THE WRONG EX-AGENT OF S.H.I.E.L.D.

--MAY AS WELL START HERE...



...THIS IS WHERE NOVA WOULD HAVE COME FIRST, TO SEE WHAT WAS LEFT OF THIS PLACE.

HAVE TO SAY, I'M FAIRLY IMPRESSED, STEVE...

THESE DOMED AREAS ACTUALLY SIMULATE EARTH'S GRAVITY AND ATMOSPHERE...

WONDER WHAT KIND OF HAZARD PAY THEY WERE GIVING THEIR MINERS?

SERIOUSLY, HOW MUCH DO YOU GET TO WORK ON FREAKING MARS?

PROBABLY LIKE A MILLION BUCKS A YEAR.

YEAH, I TEND TO DOUBT THAT...

HOW LONG
AGO DID THEY SHUT
DOWN *OPERATIONS*
HERE, STEVE?

ABOUT A
MONTH.

INTERESTING...

...BECAUSE
SOMEONE'S
BEEN HERE
RECENTLY.

THESE
BOOT PRINTS
CAN'T BE A
DAY OLD.

YES, AND
SOME OF THIS
MACHINERY LOOKS
LIKE IT WAS DRAGGED
OUT OF THE WAY OF
SOMETHING...

WISH I HAD
AN *INVENTORY*
OF THEIR
EQUIPMENT...

COMMANDER--
OVER *HERE!* I FOUND
SOMETHING...



THEY
DRILLED A HOLE
THIS WIDE? LOOKING
FOR *MINERAL*
DEPOSITS?

THIS IS
GETTING SHADIER BY
THE MINUTE...

YOU
HAVEN'T SEEN
ANYTHING
YET...



THROUGH
HERE...THEY
UNCOVERED
SOME KIND
OF OLD
CAVE...



MY GOD...

YEAH...
SOME OF
THE **MISSING
WORKERS**, I
PRESUME.

LOOKS
LIKE **THIS** IS
WHERE THEY
FOUND YOUR
SERPENT-LIKE
CROWN OR
WHATEVER
IT IS...

DAMN IT...

WE'VE
GOT TO
FIND **NOVA**...
NOW.

I
SENT THAT
BOY INTO
A **DEATH
TRAP**...

SOME
INTERESTING
READINGS OVER
THIS WAY...I'M
PICKING
UP--

BEAST!
**LOOK
OUT!**

HEY!
GYAA--

CLASH

YIKES!
WHO ARE THESE
BOZOS?!

BZAAAM

BZAAAT

BZAAAK

AVENGERS!
WE'RE UNDER
ATTACK!

BZAAAM

BZAAAT

BZAAAK



DON'T
LET THEM GET
AWAY!

ANY OF
THEM!

WHAAM

BZAAM

BZAAM

BZAAM

KAWHUDO

NOT A
PROBLEM.

THEY
WERE HIDING
IN THERE
THE ENTIRE
TIME...
...AND MY
SENSORS
DIDN'T SPOT
THEM.

KRAAK

CONSIDER
IT LATER,
BEAST. NOT
DURING
BATTLE.

AGREED.

BZAATZ

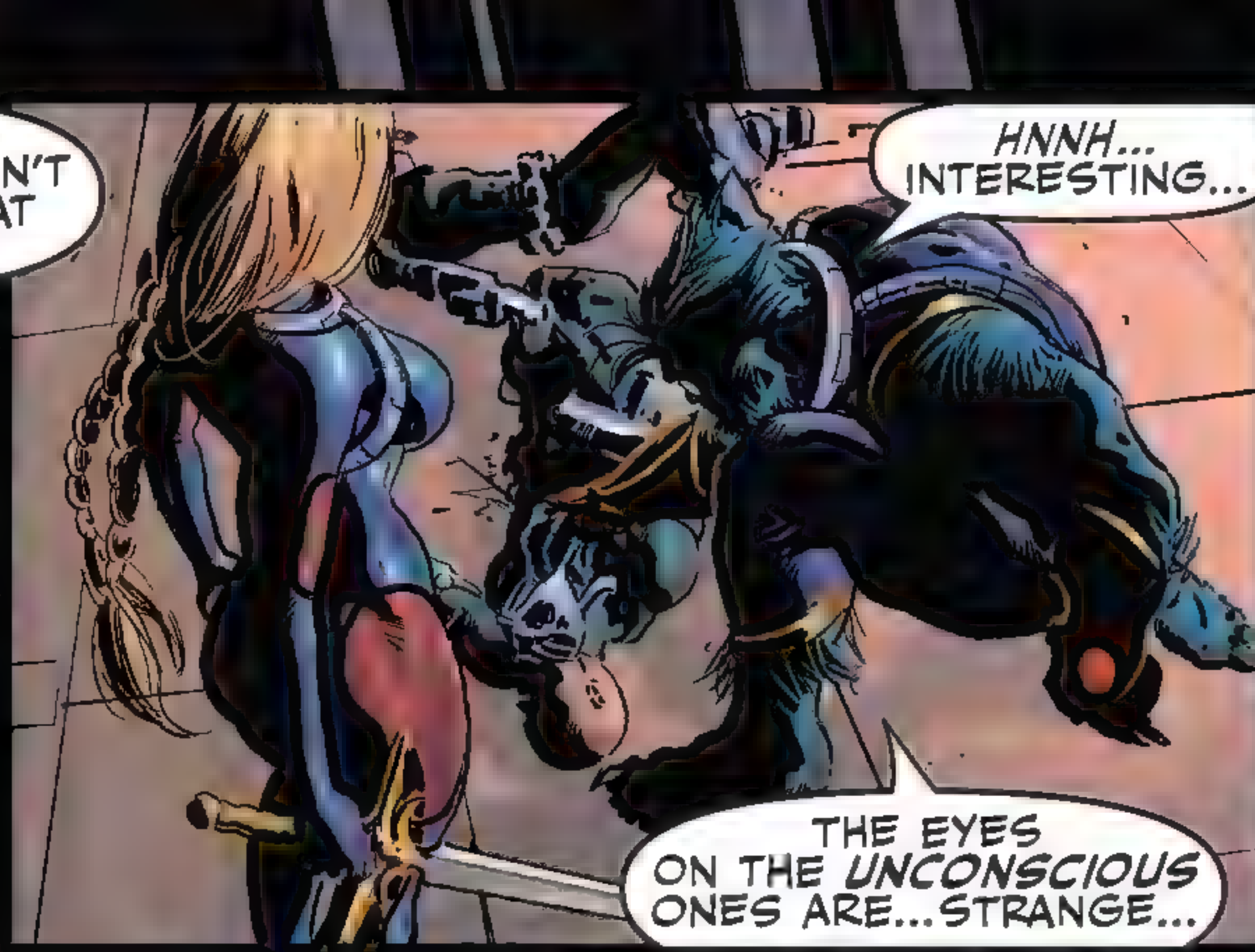






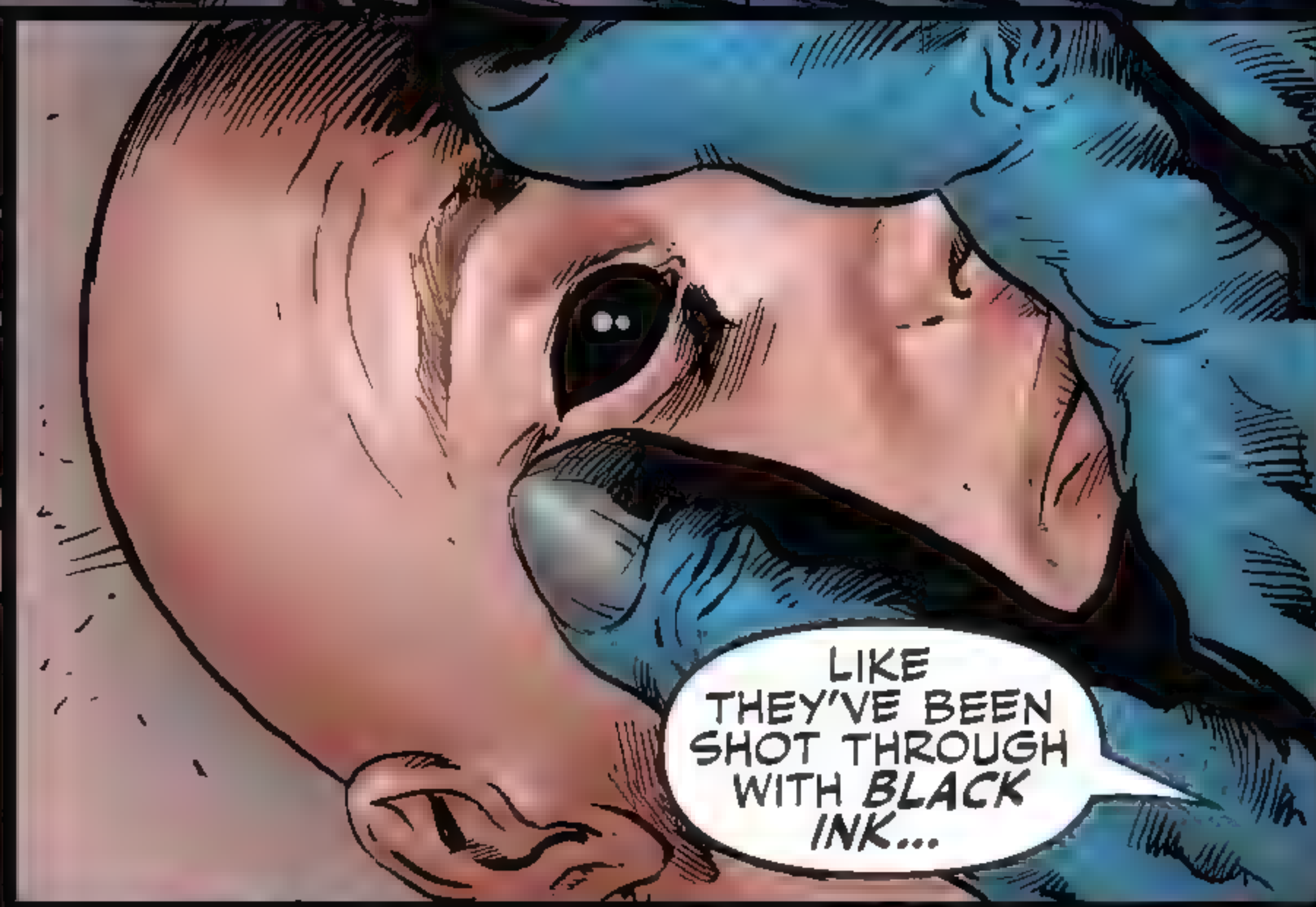
DAMN IT...

SO, WHO ARE THEY? I DON'T RECOGNIZE THAT UNIFORM...

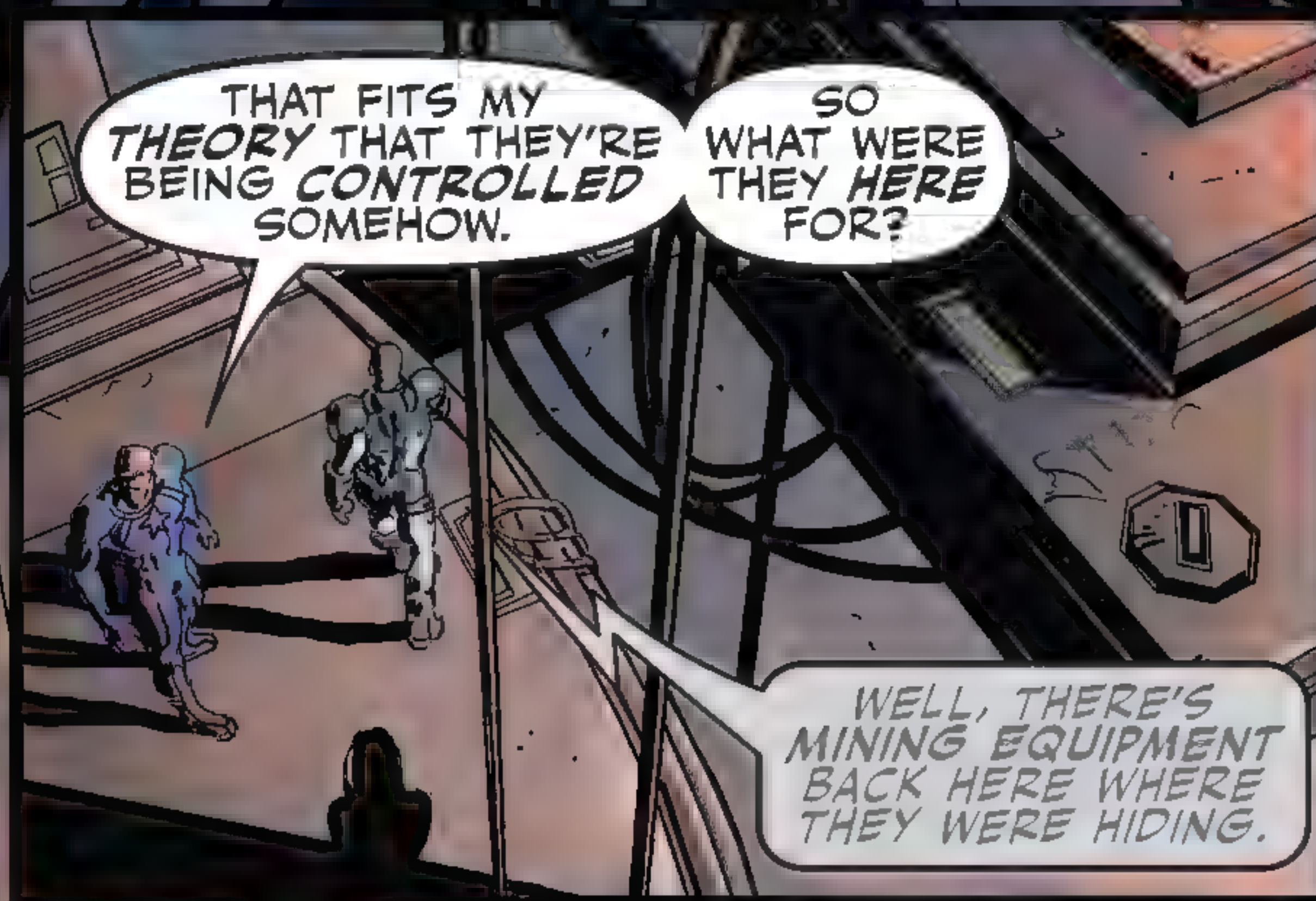


HNNH... INTERESTING...

THE EYES ON THE UNCONSCIOUS ONES ARE... STRANGE...



LIKE THEY'VE BEEN SHOT THROUGH WITH BLACK INK...



THAT FITS MY THEORY THAT THEY'RE BEING CONTROLLED SOMEHOW.

SO WHAT WERE THEY HERE FOR?

WELL, THERE'S MINING EQUIPMENT BACK HERE WHERE THEY WERE HIDING.



AND IT LOOKS LIKE THEY LEFT THEIR ROVER BY THE BAY DOORS...

RIGHT... LET'S CHECK OUTSIDE...

PEFFF



FROM THESE TIRE TRACKS, LOOKS LIKE THEY'VE MADE MORE THAN A FEW TRIPS TO THOSE MOUNTAINS...

...AND AT LEAST ONE IN FROM THE DESERT.



LET'S HAVE OUR FLYING SQUAD RECON THAT...

WAR MACHINE, TAKE ANT-MAN AND REPORT IN WITH A SITREP IF YOU FIND ANYTHING.

ROGER THAT.



LET'S MOVE, KID.

I HAVE A CODENAME, Y'KNOW.

NOT TO ME YOU DON'T. NOT 'TIL YOU'VE EARNED THAT NAME.



NATASHA, YOU THREE TAKE THE ROAD MORE TRAVELED, SEE WHAT'S AT THE END OF IT...

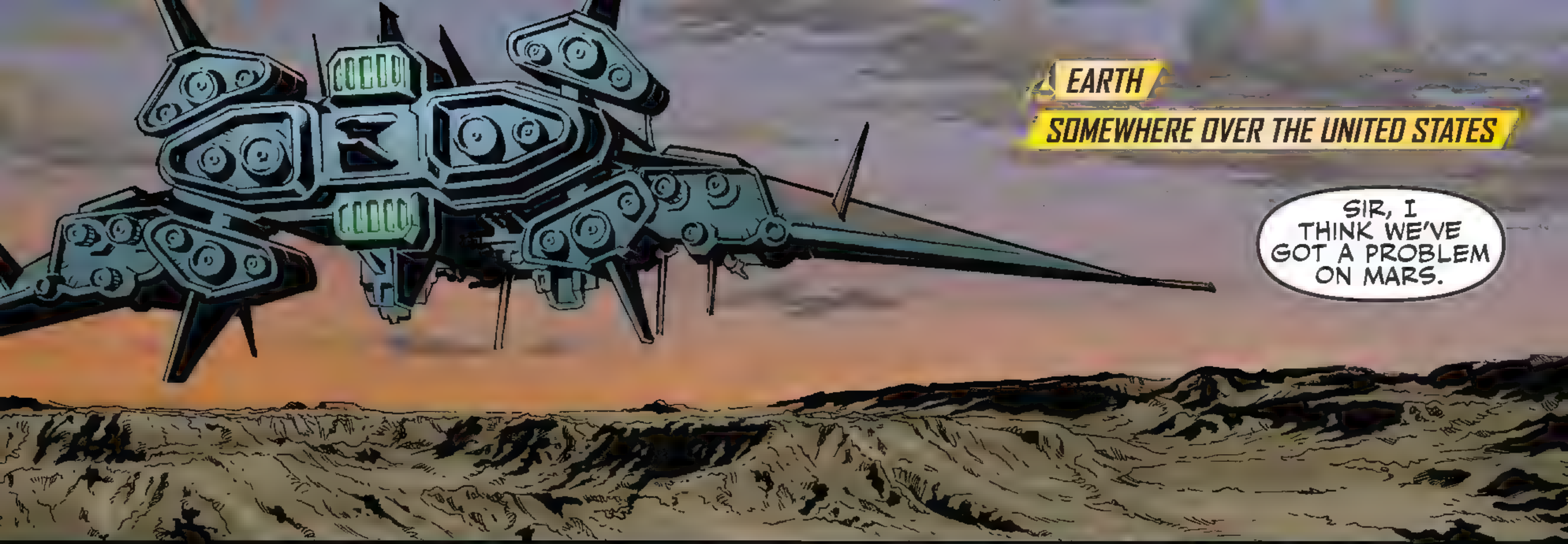
...AND BE CAREFUL.

AND WHAT OF YOU?



BEAST AND I ARE GOING TO FIND NOVA... WHETHER HE'S DEAD OR ALIVE...

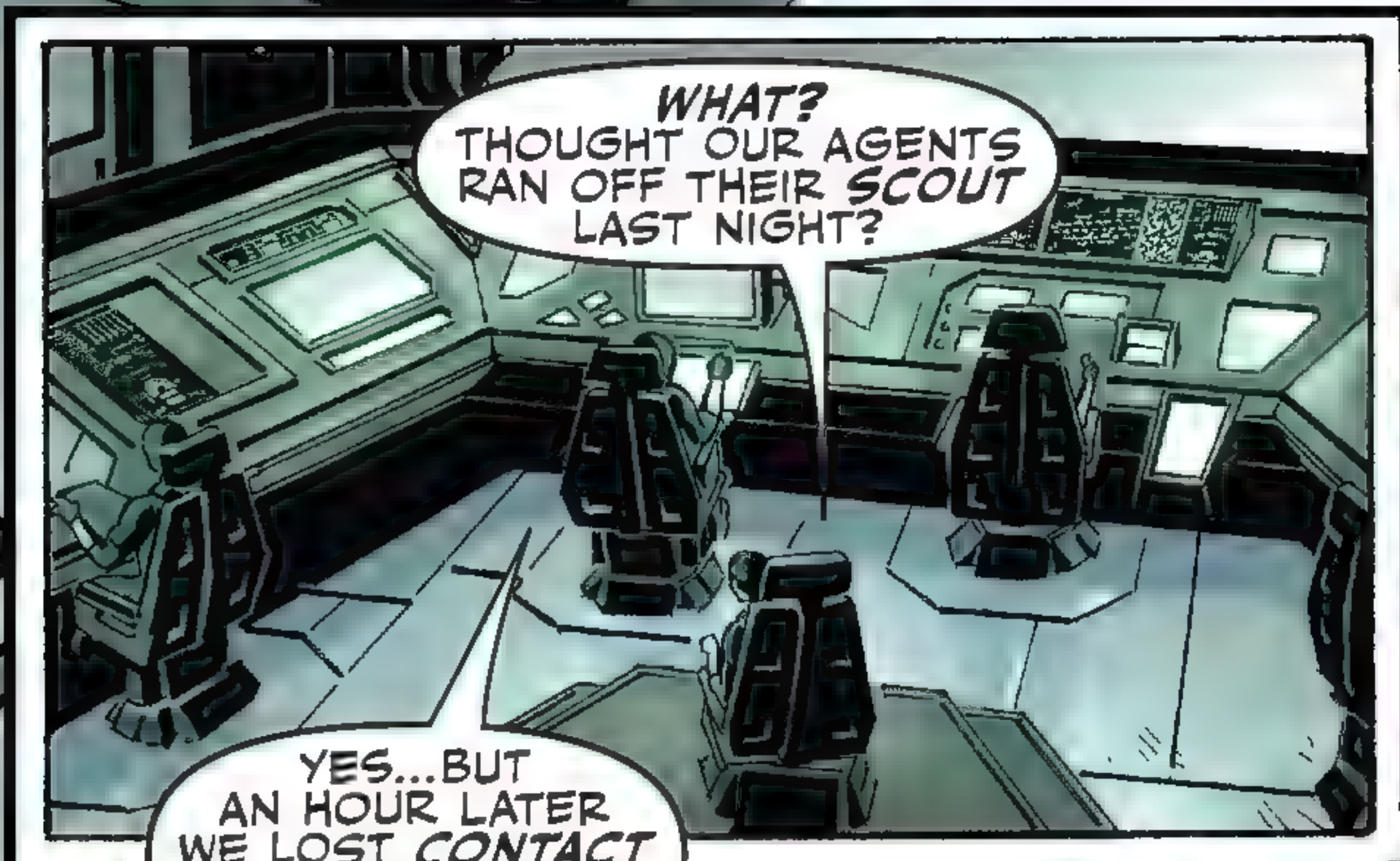
I WON'T LET HIM ROT ON THIS DEAD PLANET.



EARTH

SOMEWHERE OVER THE UNITED STATES

SIR, I
THINK WE'VE
GOT A PROBLEM
ON MARS.



WHAT?
THOUGHT OUR AGENTS
RAN OFF THEIR *SCOUT*
LAST NIGHT?

YES...BUT
AN HOUR LATER
WE LOST CONTACT
WITH THE *ENTIRE*
SQUADRON.

AND NOW OUR
DRONE SENSORS ARE
PICKING UP *ENERGY*
READINGS.



WHAT
ARE YOU
SAYIN'?

I THINK...
I THINK SOMEONE'S
ACTIVATED THE *THIRD*
CROWN, SIR.



PILOT,
PUT US IN
HYPER-
DRIVE.

YES,
SIR.

I NEED
TO SEE THE
BOARD OF
DIRECTORS--
STAT.

BACK ON THE RED PLANET...

OKAY, LOOKS LIKE
WE'VE GOT SOME KIND
OF BASE, MAYBE...

NOT SCANNING ANY
SIGN OF MOVEMENT...NO
HEAT SIGNATURES...

STILL, LET ME
TAKE POINT.
WHOEVER
THESE GUYS
ARE, THEY'VE
GOT GOOD
TECH...

YEAH,
I WAS AT THE
LAST FIGHT, TOO,
REMEMBER?

JUST STICK
CLOSE, OKAY?
FOR YOUR
OWN GOOD.

WHATEVER...

KNOCK
KNOCK...?

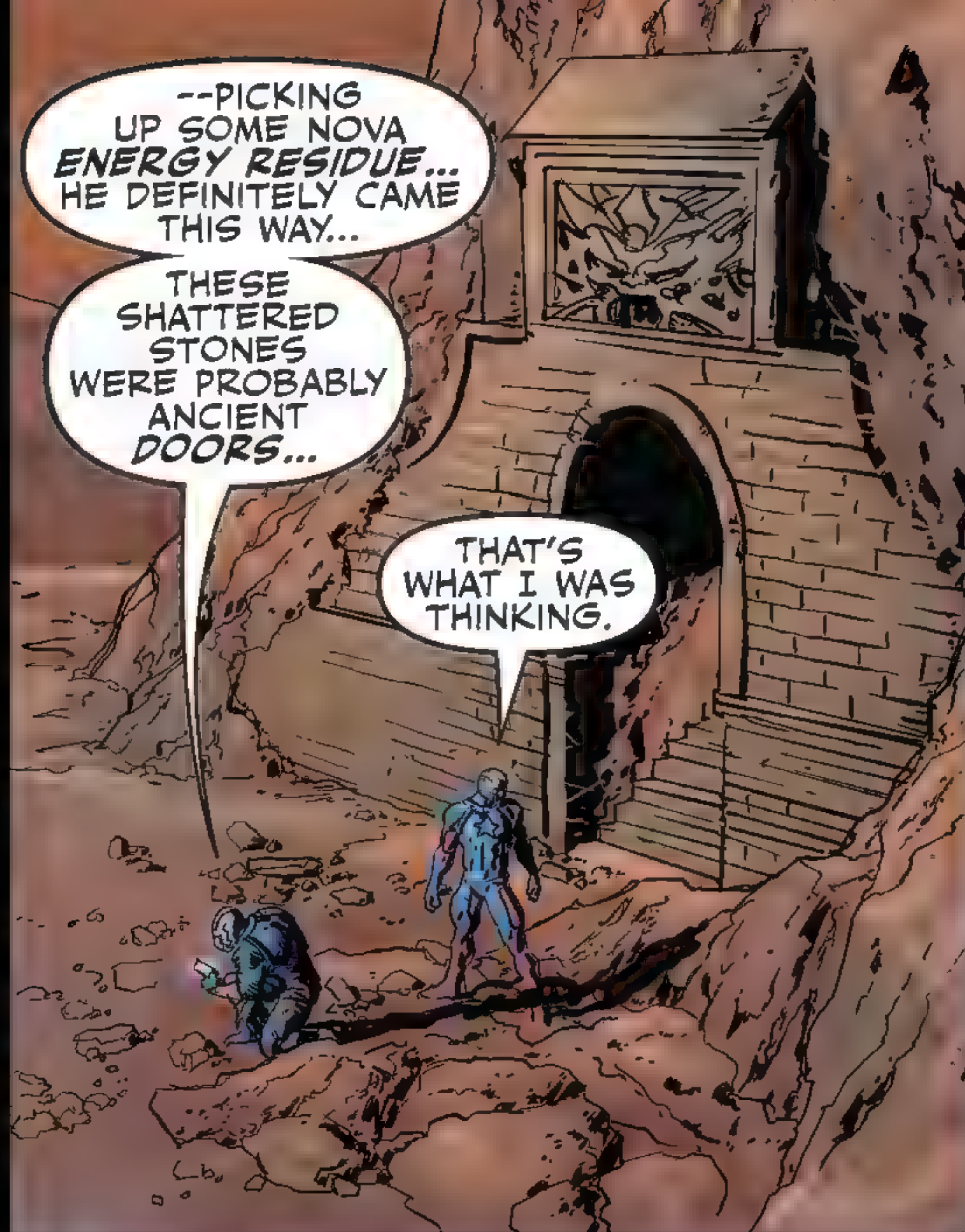
KREEEEKKK

OKAY,
STEVE...GOT A
STRUCTURE WITH
A FEW MORE OF
THOSE ROVERS
OUTSIDE IT.

WE'RE INVESTIGATING,
BUT IT SEEMS
DESERTED SO FAR.

ROGER
THAT.
GATHER ANY
INTEL YOU CAN
ON OUR NEW
FRIENDS...





--PICKING UP SOME NOVA **ENERGY RESIDUE**... HE DEFINITELY CAME THIS WAY...

THESE SHATTERED STONES WERE PROBABLY ANCIENT **DOORS**...

THAT'S WHAT I WAS THINKING.



LOOKS LIKE THERE'S AN **OPENING** UP AHEAD...

YES, I'M GETTING SOME **STRONG** READINGS FROM THAT DIRECTION, TOO...



OH...

NOW **THIS** IS INTERESTING...

IT'S LIKE A **TEMPLE** OR MAYBE A **TOMB** OF SOME KIND.



I'M GUESSING **THIS** WAS NOVA'S **ENTRY POINT**.

SO IT WOULD **APPEAR**.





...WUHH...



WHAT HAVE YOU DONE...?

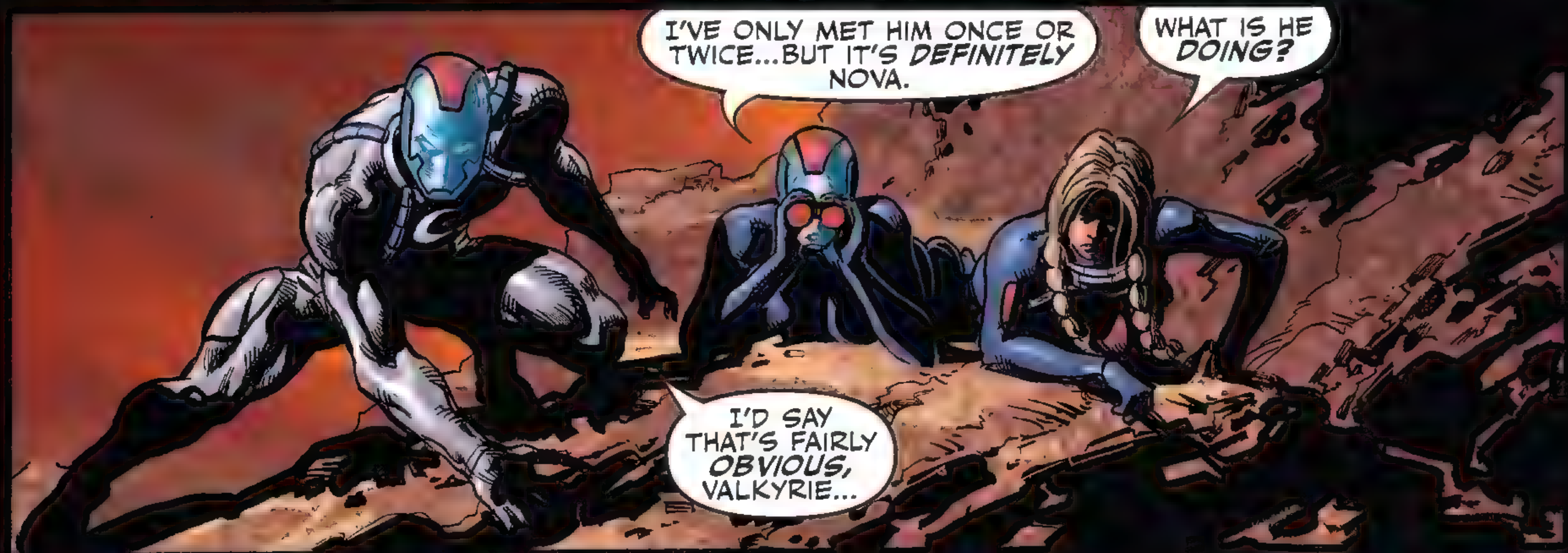


ARE YOU HUMANS SO FOOLISH THAT YOU DESIRE THE END OF ALL THINGS?

WHERE IS THE CROWN?



ARE YOU
SURE THAT'S
HIM?



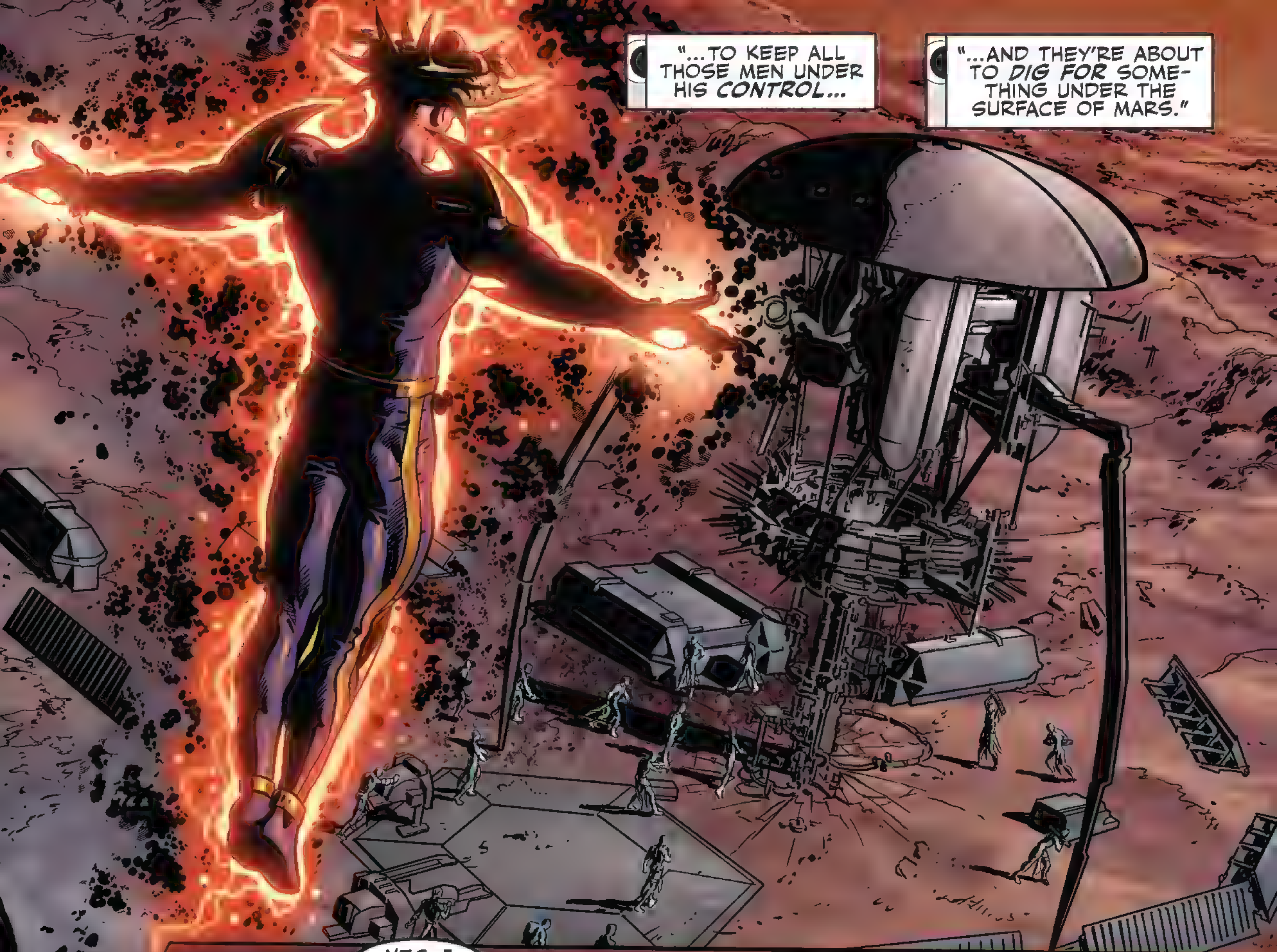
I'VE ONLY MET HIM ONCE OR
TWICE...BUT IT'S **DEFINITELY**
NOVA.

WHAT IS HE
DOING?

I'D SAY
THAT'S FAIRLY
OBVIOUS,
VALKYRIE...

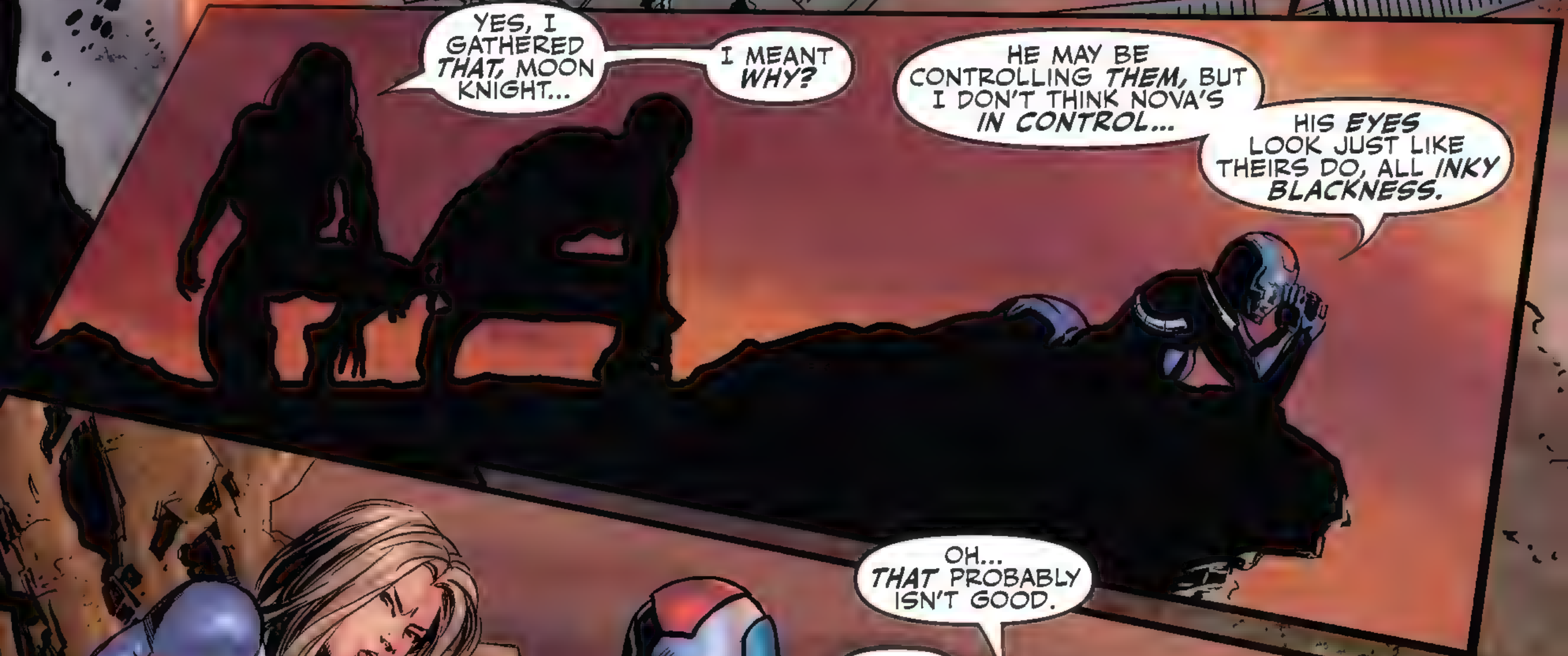


"...HE'S WIELDING
AN **UNKNOWN**
POWER SOURCE..."



"...TO KEEP ALL
THOSE MEN UNDER
HIS *CONTROL*..."

"...AND THEY'RE ABOUT
TO *DIG* FOR SOME-
THING UNDER THE
SURFACE OF MARS."



YES, I
GATHERED
THAT, MOON
KNIGHT...

I MEANT
WHY?

HE MAY BE
CONTROLLING *THEM*, BUT
I DON'T THINK NOVA'S
IN *CONTROL*...

HIS *EYES*
LOOK JUST LIKE
THEIRS DO, ALL *INKY*
BLACKNESS.



OH...
THAT PROBABLY
ISN'T GOOD.

WHAT?



I THINK
HE JUST
SPOTTED
US.



#1 VARIANT BY **MARKO DJURDJEVIĆ**





TEXAS. AUGUST 1865.

THEY RODE OUT
OF THE DUST AND
TUMBLEWEEDS...

OUT INTO THE
BLISTERING
SUN... UNYIELDING

THE WAR WAS
OVER. THEY
KNEW THAT
WELL. THESE
SONS OF
INDUSTRY...

STILL THEY RODE...
FOR VENGEANCE...
IN PURSUIT OF A
TURNCOAT, A
UNION SPY...

ALOYSIUS THORN-
DRAKE HAD ONCE
SEEN PRESIDENT
JEFFERSON DAVIS
BOW TO KISS HIS
FATHER'S SIGNET
RING...

HIS FATHER, WHO
HAD ALL BUT
FINANCED THE
CONFEDERACY

WHO'D ONCE TOLD
HIM "THE ONLY
THING BETTER THAN
BEING A KING... IS
MAKING ONE."

"I'M 'FRAID
TO SAY... WE
LOST HIM, MAJOR
THORNDRAKE."

HIS FATHER WHO
WAS NOW NEARLY
BANKRUPT...

LOST HIM...
HOW?

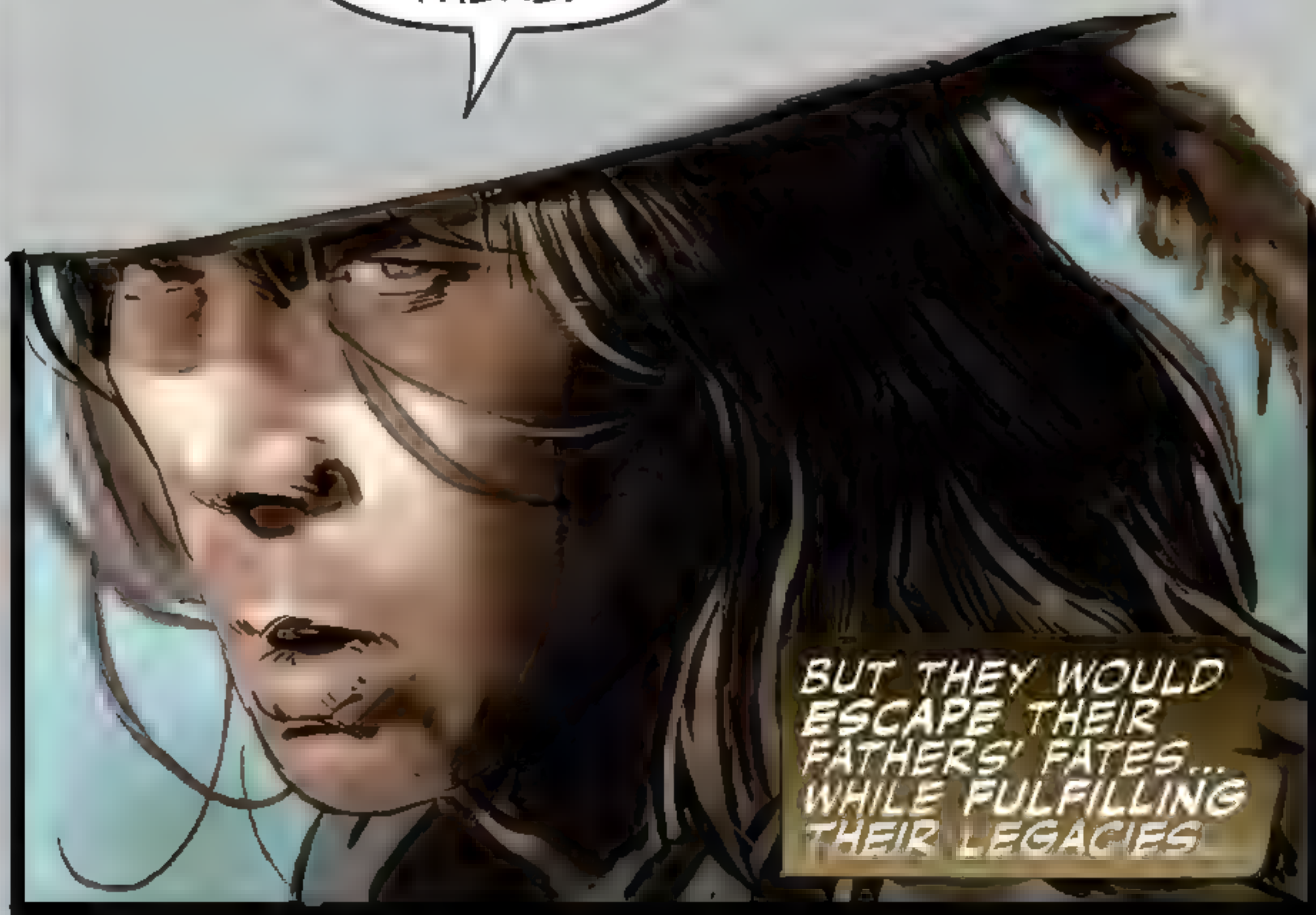
WAS THERE
A DUST STORM
I SLEPT
THROUGH?



LIKE THE FATHERS
OF HIS BROTHERS-
IN-ARMS...

NO SIR,
MAJOR...I
CAN'T RIGHTLY
EXPLAIN IT.

SAW IT
THROUGH MY
FIELD GLASSES...HE
RODE OUT 'CROSS
THE PLAIN...



AN' HE JUST
DISAPPEARED...

VANISHED...
LIKE HE
WASN'T NEVER
THERE.

BUT THEY WOULD
ESCAPE THEIR
FATHERS' FATES...
WHILE FULFILLING
THEIR LEGACIES



SHOW ME **THIS
PLACE**...WHERE HE
DISAPPEARED.



AND IT ALL BEGAN
THE DAY THEY RODE
OUT OF THE DUST

...AND FOLLOWED
THEIR PREY UNTIL HIS
TRACKS STOPPED...

THAT WAS THE
FIRST TIME THE
ABYSS TOUCHED
ALOYSIUS
THORNDRAKE

...IN THE INFINITE
FOLDINGS OF
TIME AND SPACE





...THE UNIVERSE RUSHES AT ME AND AROUND ME AND THROUGH ME AND I AM...

...FREAKING OUT...

...I AM A SPECK ON A MOTE OF DUST IN THE EYE OF A STORM... I AM...

...I AM ANT-MAN... I AM...

...FREAKING OUT... FREAKING...

...WHY AM I NOT DEAD WHAT IS HAPPENING TO ME WHY AM I NOT DEAD...

...AND OH MAN OH MAN... I BET I JUST GOT KICKED OUT OF THE AVENGERS...

...IF I'M
NOT
ALREADY
DEAD

WHERE
IS IT?!

LISTEN
TO ME--
LISTEN!

WHERE IS
THE THORNED
CROWN?!

WE DON'T
HAVE IT...I DON'T
EVEN KNOW WHAT
YOU'RE TALKING
ABOUT.

NOW IF
YOU WANT TO
LET ME GO AND
EXPLAIN...?

YOU'RE...
NOT LYING...

NEVER.

THEN...
WHAT HAS
HAPPENED?

I BELIEVE I CAN
ANSWER THAT
QUESTION...

I'M SORRY,
THIS HAS BEEN A
WEIRD DAY...

BUT
DID THAT
HELMET
JUST
SPEAK?

I AM NOT A HELMET. I AM THE NOVA CORPS WORLD-MIND, AND I CAN TELL YOU ABOUT THE CROWN THIS CONSTRUCT SEEKS.

THEN INFORM ME, WORLDMIND, BECAUSE THE FATE OF--

CONSTRUCT?

HANG ON.

COMMANDER ROGERS?!

WHAT IS IT, VAL?

MY COMPANIONS AND I FOUND YOUR MISSING MAN, NOVA.

REGRETTABLY, HE IS NOT HIMSELF AT THE MOMENT.

HE WEARS A STRANGE HELM AND COMMANDS MEN WHO ARE DRILLING ON THE SURFACE OF THE PLANET.

I KNOW NOT WHY!



RAAAAAA!

I WILL STOP THEM, WHILE I CAN. WHATEVER THEY ARE AFTER CAN ONLY BRING ILL...

BUT THERE IS ONLY SO MUCH EVEN I CAN DO ON MY OWN.

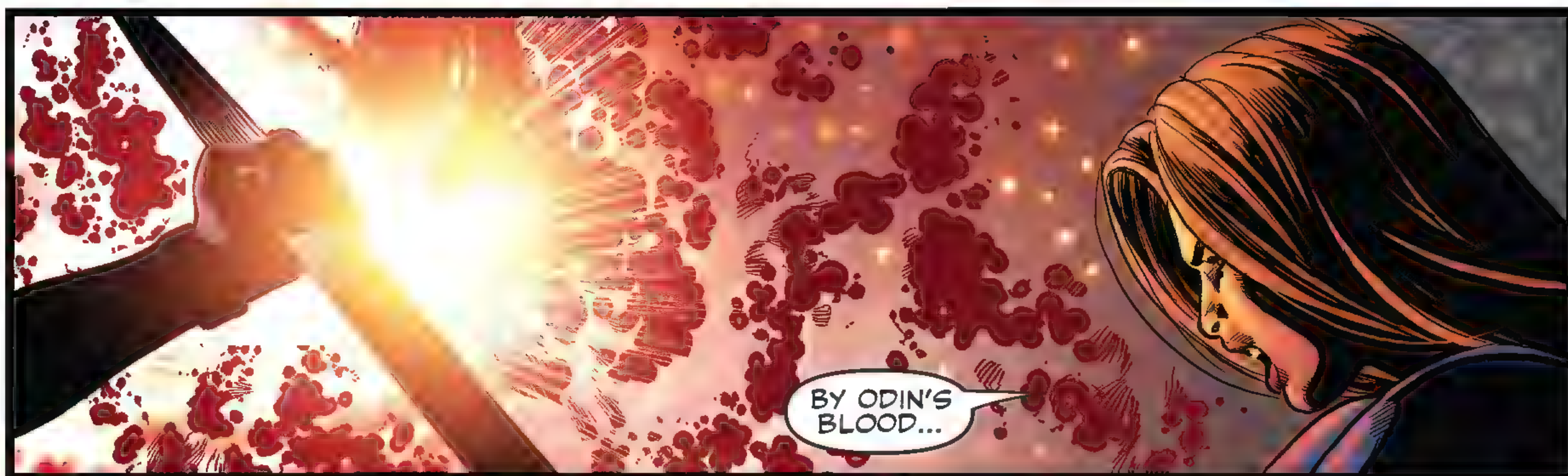
HA!

ON YOUR OWN? WHAT HAPPENED TO BLACK WIDOW AND MOON KNIGHT?

THEY FELL. QUICKLY.

THIS NOVA HAS MUCH POWER...MORE THAN HE SHOULD.

BUT I SHALL HOLD HIM AT BAY UNTIL YOU ARRIVE.





WHAT
IS WRONG
WITH THESE
MEN?

THE WOMAN'S
SWORD DESTROYED
THEIR OXYGEN FEEDS...
THEY ARE CHOKING,
MASTER.

VERY
WELL...

THEN LET
MARS HAVE
OXYGEN...

THANK...
THANK YOU,
MASTER...

WE'LL
HAVE NO MORE
DELAYS.

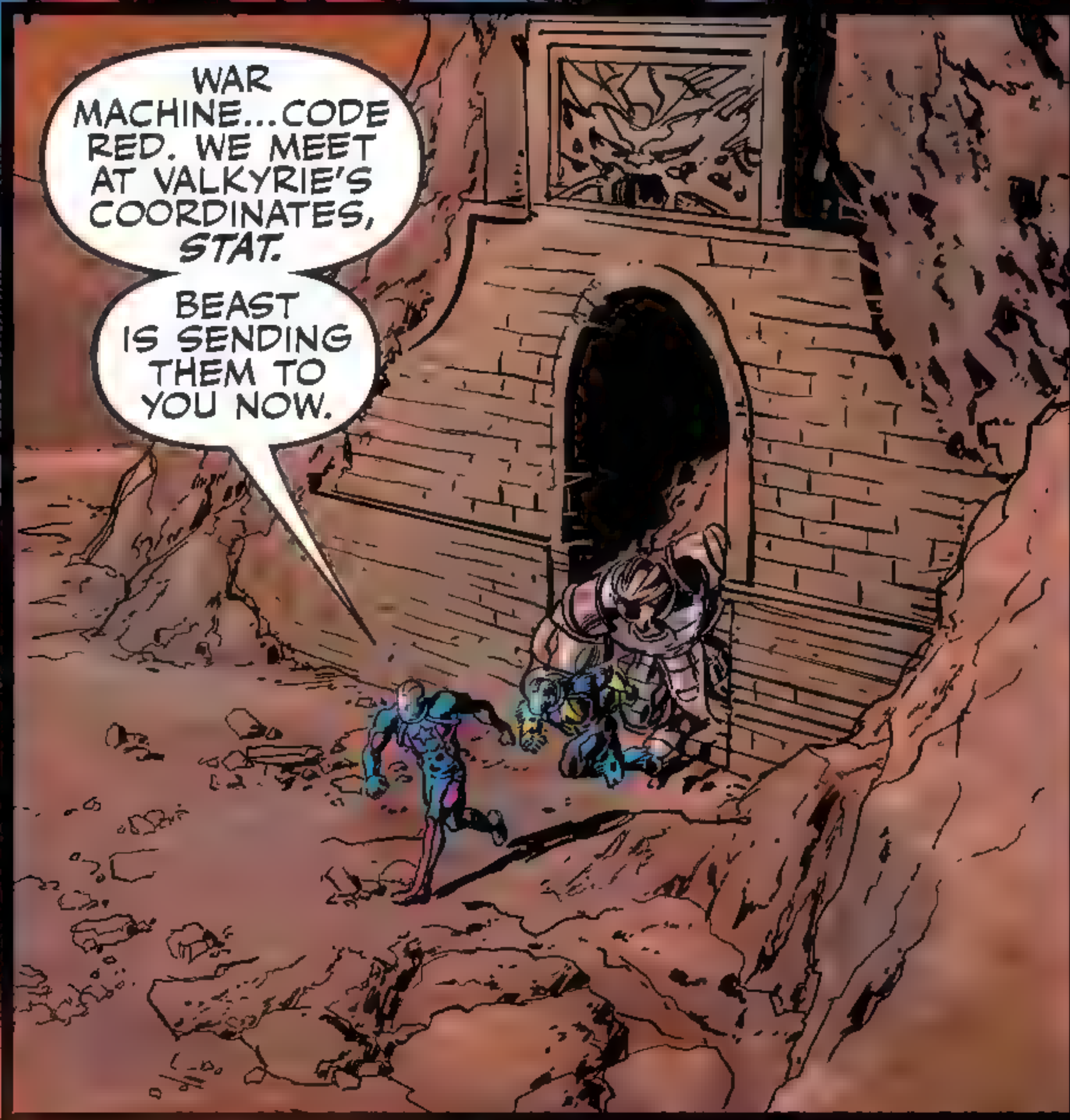
NOW
BACK TO
WORK.

VAL?!
DAMN IT.
WE'VE
GOT TO MOVE,
NOW.

YES, IF WHAT
THE *WORLDWIND*
AND YOUR SOLDIER
SAY IS TRUE...
... WE
HAVE *LITTLE*
TIME.



WAR
MACHINE...CODE
RED. WE MEET
AT VALKYRIE'S
COORDINATES,
STAT.
BEAST
IS SENDING
THEM TO
YOU NOW.



ON MY WAY, COMMANDER...
BUT WE MIGHT HAVE
ANOTHER PROBLEM...

WHAT DID
ANT-MAN
DO NOW?

I WISH I
COULD TELL
YOU...

...BUT I HAVE NO
IDEA WHERE THE
LITTLE IDIOT'S
GOTTEN TO.

NOT EVEN PICKING
UP HIS SIGNAL
ON A SCAN.

LIKE HE JUST
DISAPPEARED.

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

WHEEEEEOOOP WHEEEEEOOOP WHEEEEEOOOP

I DON'T KNOW. GOT AN UNAUTHORIZED ACCESS ALERT ON THE MONITOR...



...BUT NOTHING CAME THROUGH THE VANISHING POINT.

WHEEEEEOOOP WHEEEEEOOOP

WELL, SHUT THAT DAMN ALARM DOWN AND RUN A DIAGNOSTIC.

I'LL REPORT TO DIRECTOR THORNDRAKE...

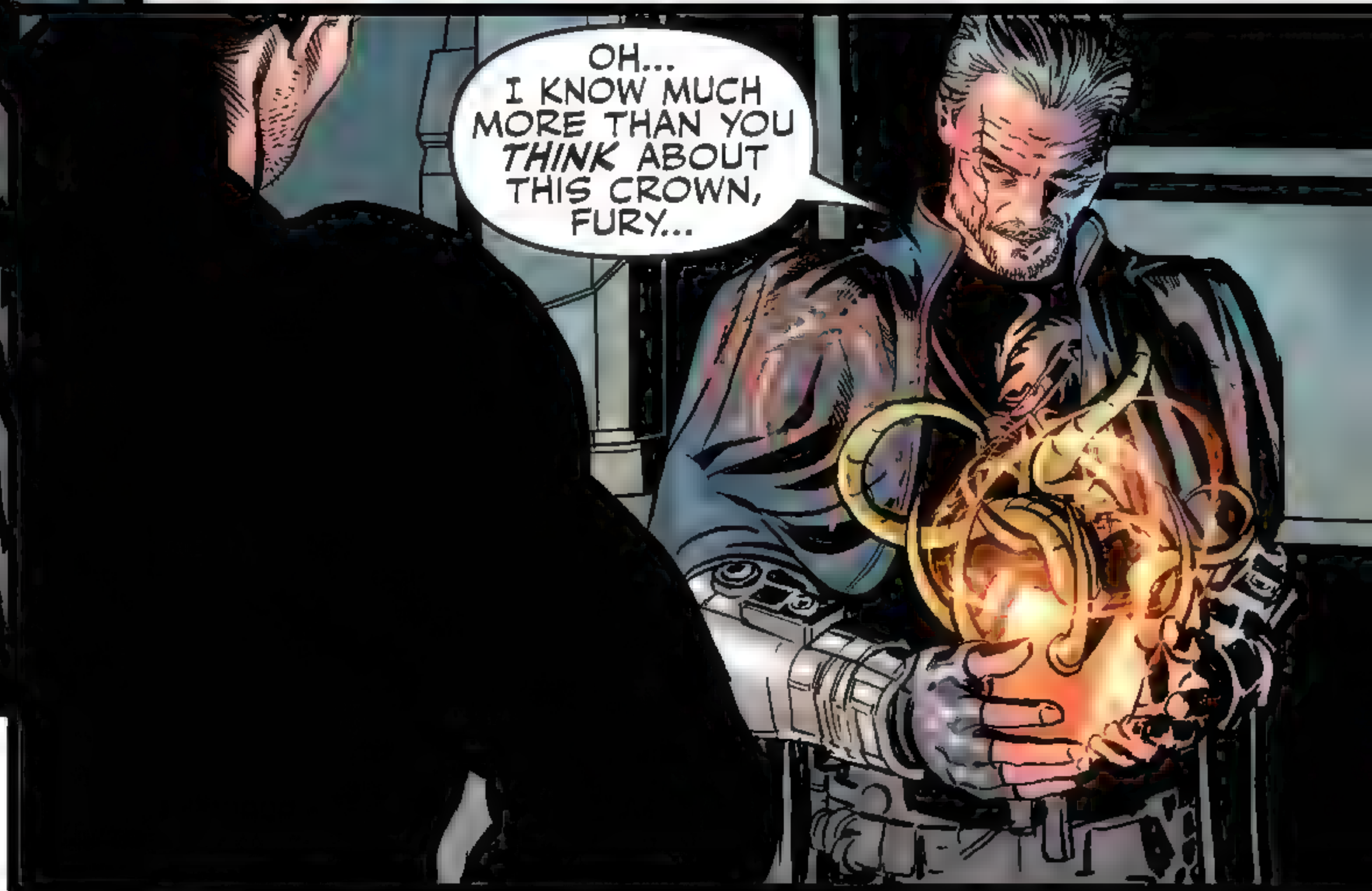
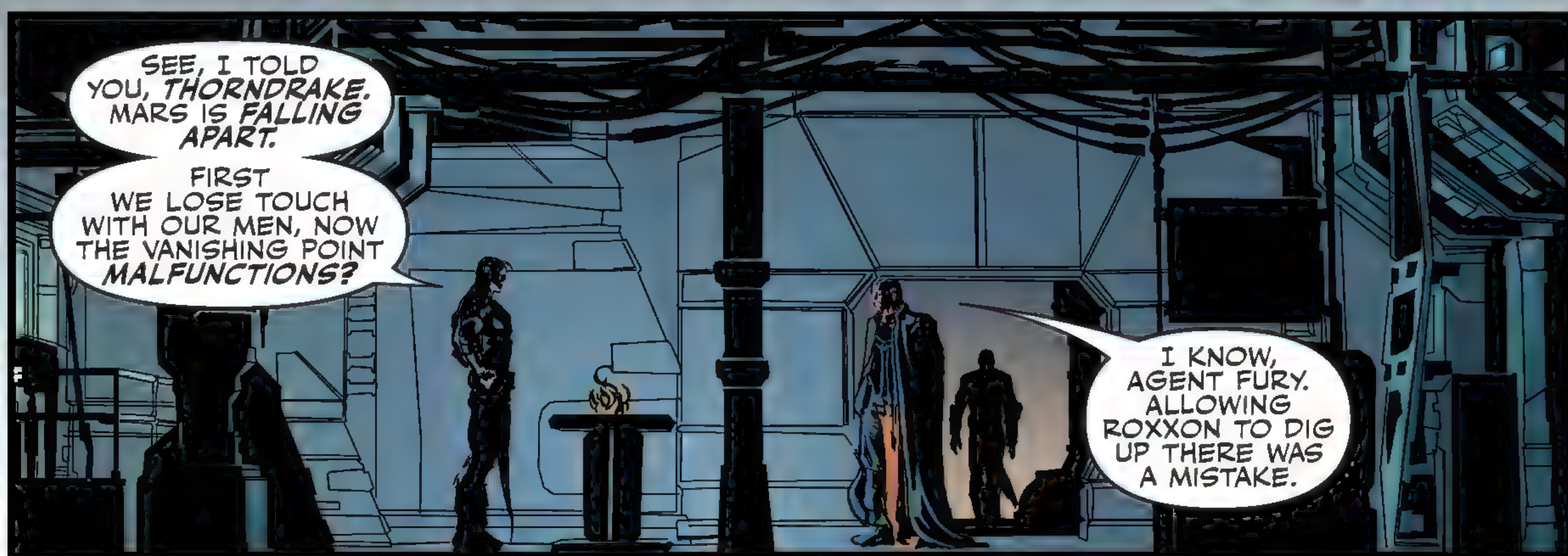
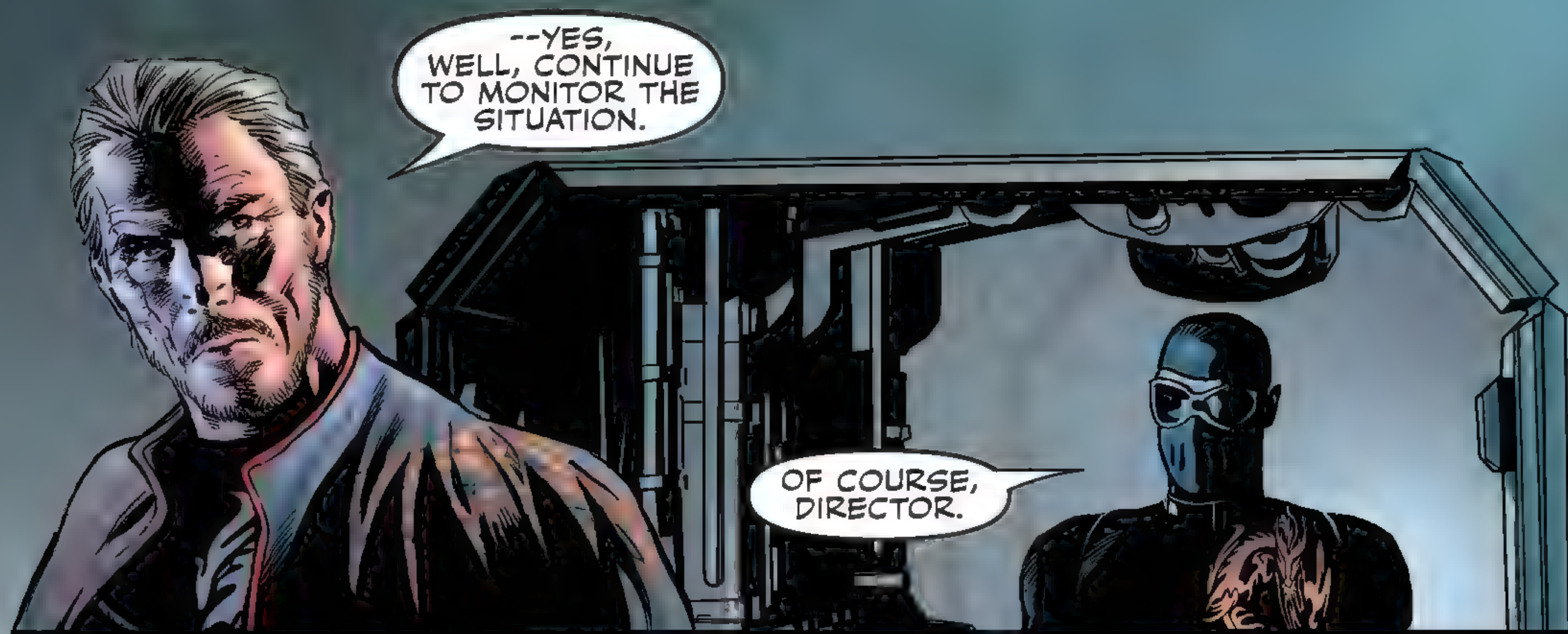
WHEEEEEOOOP WHEEEEEOOOP WHEEEEEOOOP

...SO HE KNOWS WE AREN'T BEING INVADED...

OKAY, O'GRADY... YOU DIDN'T DIE...

STAY SMALL AND STAY SAFE, RIGHT?

BUT... WHERE THE HELL ARE YOU?





STILL, AS HEAD OF SECURITY, I'M ASKIN' YOU TO LEAVE IT UNTIL WE'VE EXAMINED IT MORE FULLY.

THOSE ROXXON EXECS ACTUALLY TURNED AGAINST US WHEN IT CAME INTO THEIR POSSESSION...

...AN' I DON'T LIKE THE IMPLICATIONS OF THAT, Y'KNOW?

DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME...

...I KNOW ENOUGH NEVER TO PUT IT ON.

BUT YOU'RE RIGHT ABOUT MARS... THINGS ARE BECOMING TOO UNSTABLE.

IF THE OTHER CROWN HAS BEEN FOUND... WELL, WE CAN'T TAKE THAT CHANCE.

WE HAVE TO STOP WHOEVER'S UP THERE FROM BREAKING THE WALL...



EXACTLY.

SO WHATTA YOU WANT ME TO DO, DIRECTOR?



PREPARE THE 9TH LEGION... AND TELL THEM THEY WON'T BE COMING HOME.



BACK ON MARS.

I WILL TRY
TO EXPLAIN IN
WORDS YOU WILL
UNDERSTAND,
HUMAN...

BUT KNOW
WHAT YOUR
NOVA IS DOING
WILL *END* THIS
UNIVERSE.

BY
DIGGING ON
MARS?

HE SEEKS
TO BREAK THE
SEAL, TO AWAKEN
THE *DARKEST*
CHILD... WHO WILL
AWAKEN HIS
BROTHERS...

AND
THEY WILL
FREE THEIR
NAMELESS
FATHER
FROM HIS
PRISON...

...IN
THE *SIDEREALITY*
BEYOND WHERE ONE
SUCH AS YOU CAN SEE
OR TOUCH.

AND
WHO *IS* THIS
NAMELESS
FATHER?

HE IS
THE *REASON* I
AND THE OTHER
ARCHONS WERE
CREATED BILLIONS
OF YEARS
AGO...

... WHEN
THE STARS
WENT OUT
AND CAME
AGAIN.

"HE IS THE END *AND*
THE BEGINNING... HE IS
THE DARKNESS INSIDE
THE DARKNESS..."

"... HE IS
THE ABYSS."

"SINCE LONG
BEFORE THE
CELESTIALS AND
DEVOURERS OF
WORLDS ARRIVED,
HE HAS BEEN LYING
IN *SLUMBER*..."

"... HIS DARK TALONS
REACHING OUT *ONLY*
AS A SHADOW IN
ETERNITY'S ENDLESS
DREAMING..."

"... TAINTING
ALL WHO
THEY TOUCH."

"THOSE WHO
WATCH SET MY
BROTHERS AND
ME THE TASK
OF GUARDING
AND WAITING."

"WAITING FOR THE TIME
OF *NULLIFICATION*,
WHEN HE WILL RISE..."



... BUT THAT
TIME IS *NOT*
NOW.

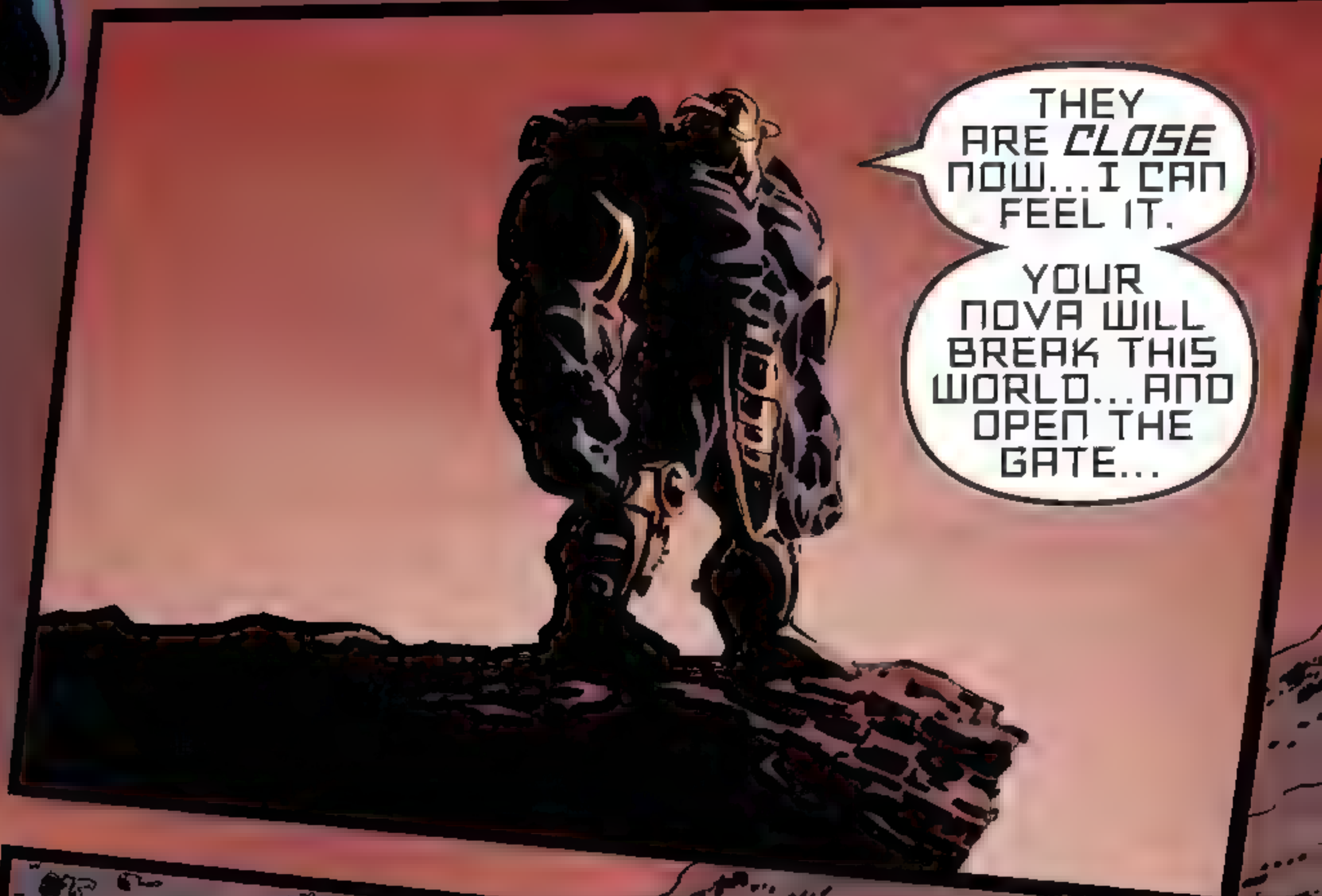
THOSE
WHO WATCH?
THE *WATCHERS*
BUILT YOU?

WAR
MACHINE!



HOW IS
SHE?

ALIVE, I THINK.
IT'S HARD TO
TELL WITH AN
ASGARDIAN.



THEY
ARE *CLOSE*
NOW... I CAN
FEEL IT.

YOUR
NOVA WILL
BREAK THIS
WORLD... AND
OPEN THE
GATE...



STEVE...
THERE'S
OXYGEN
HERE.

WHAT?



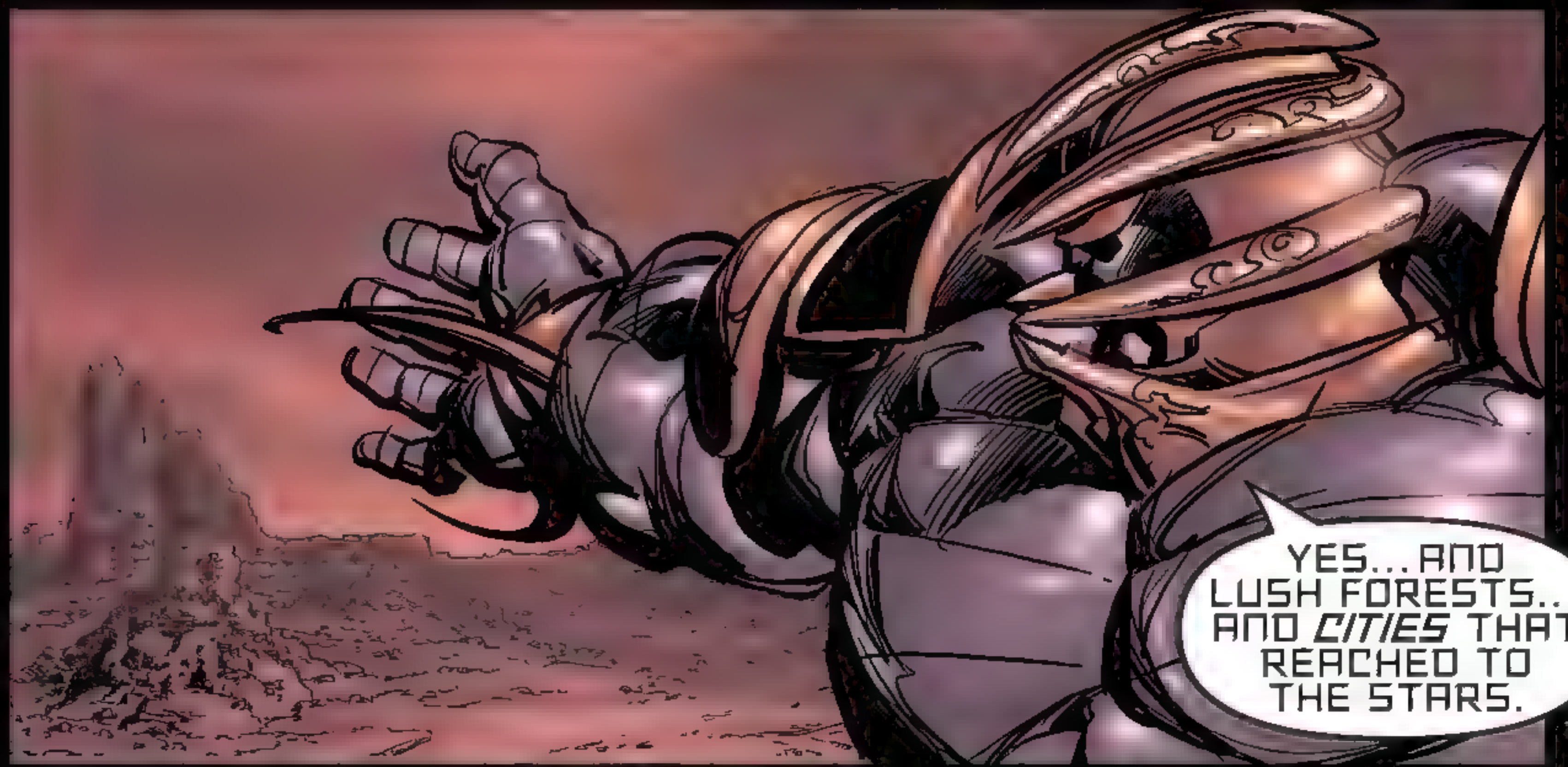
I CAN'T
EXPLAIN IT, BUT MARS'
ATMOSPHERE HAS
CHANGED...

...WE CAN
BREATHE HERE
NOW.

IT'S THE *CROWN*... THE DARKEST CHILD'S POWER WORKS THROUGH IT.

HE IS CAPABLE OF RESTORING THIS WORLD TO ITS *FORMER* STATE...

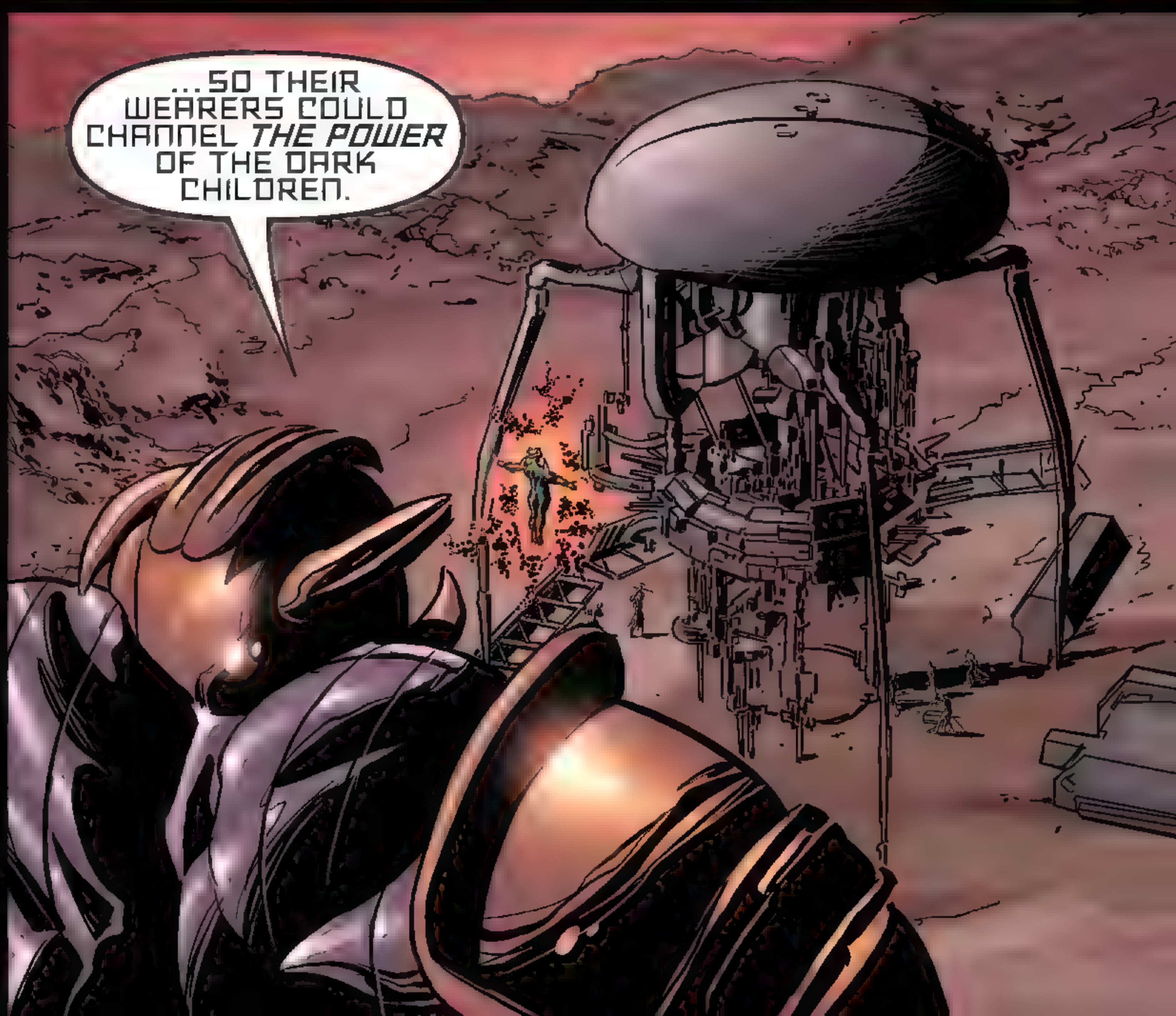
ARE YOU TELLING ME MARS ONCE HAD AN ATMOSPHERE LIKE *EARTH'S*?



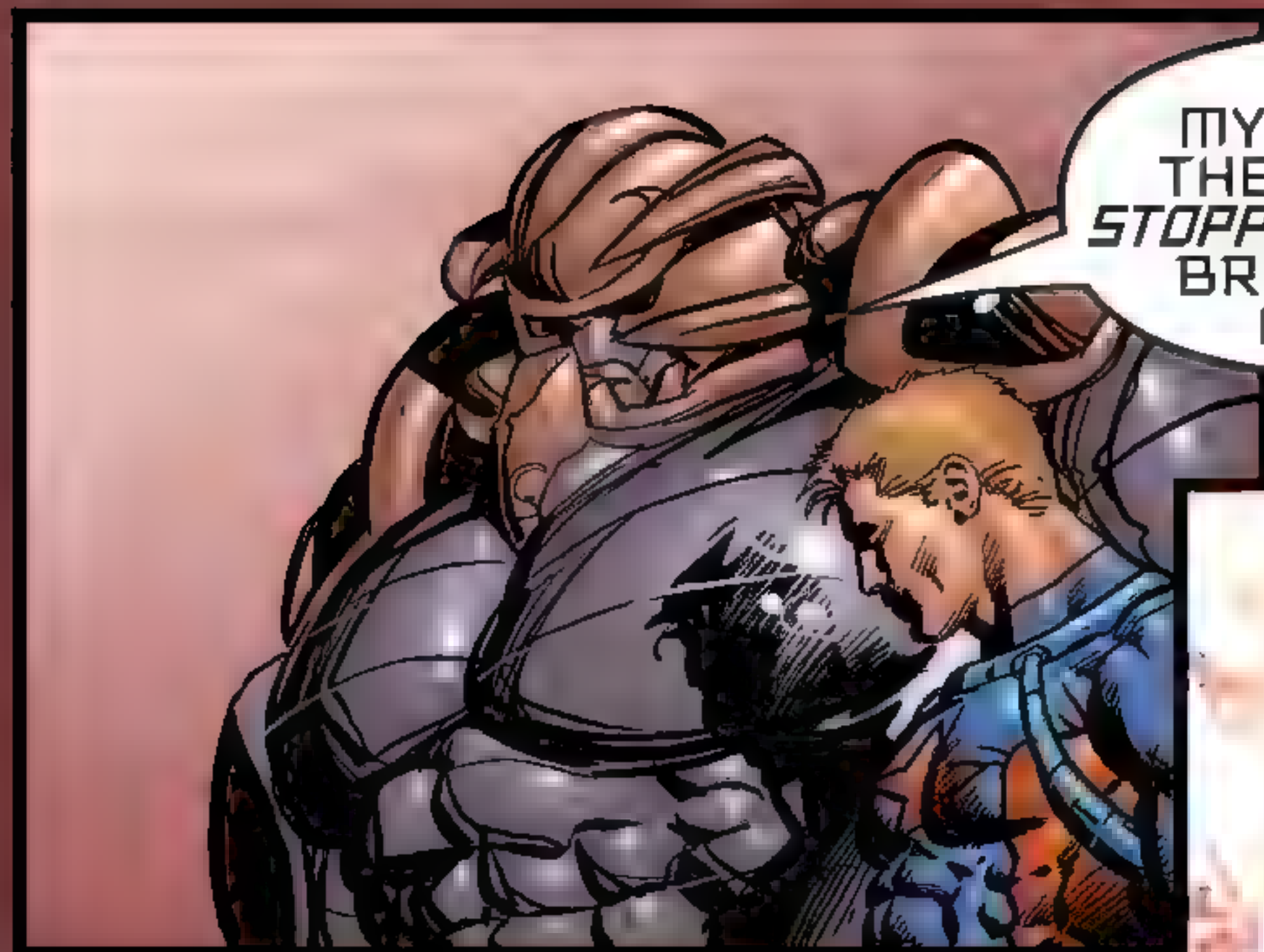
YES... AND LUSH FORESTS... AND *CITIES* THAT REACHED TO THE STARS.



BUT A *MILLENNIA* PAST, THOSE WHO HAD BEEN *TOUCHED* BY THE ABYSS MADE *THREE CROWNS*...



...SO THEIR WEARERS COULD CHANNEL *THE POWER* OF THE DARK CHILDREN.



I LOST
MY *BROTHERS*
THEN, WHEN WE
STOPPED THEM FROM
BREAKING THE
WORLD...

BUT
THEIR ATTEMPT
ALL BUT *DESTROYED*
IT ANYWAY... THIS
PLANET WAS *SOON*
ABANDONED.



ONLY *I*
REMAINED...

AND
NOW I MUST
STOP THEM
AGAIN.

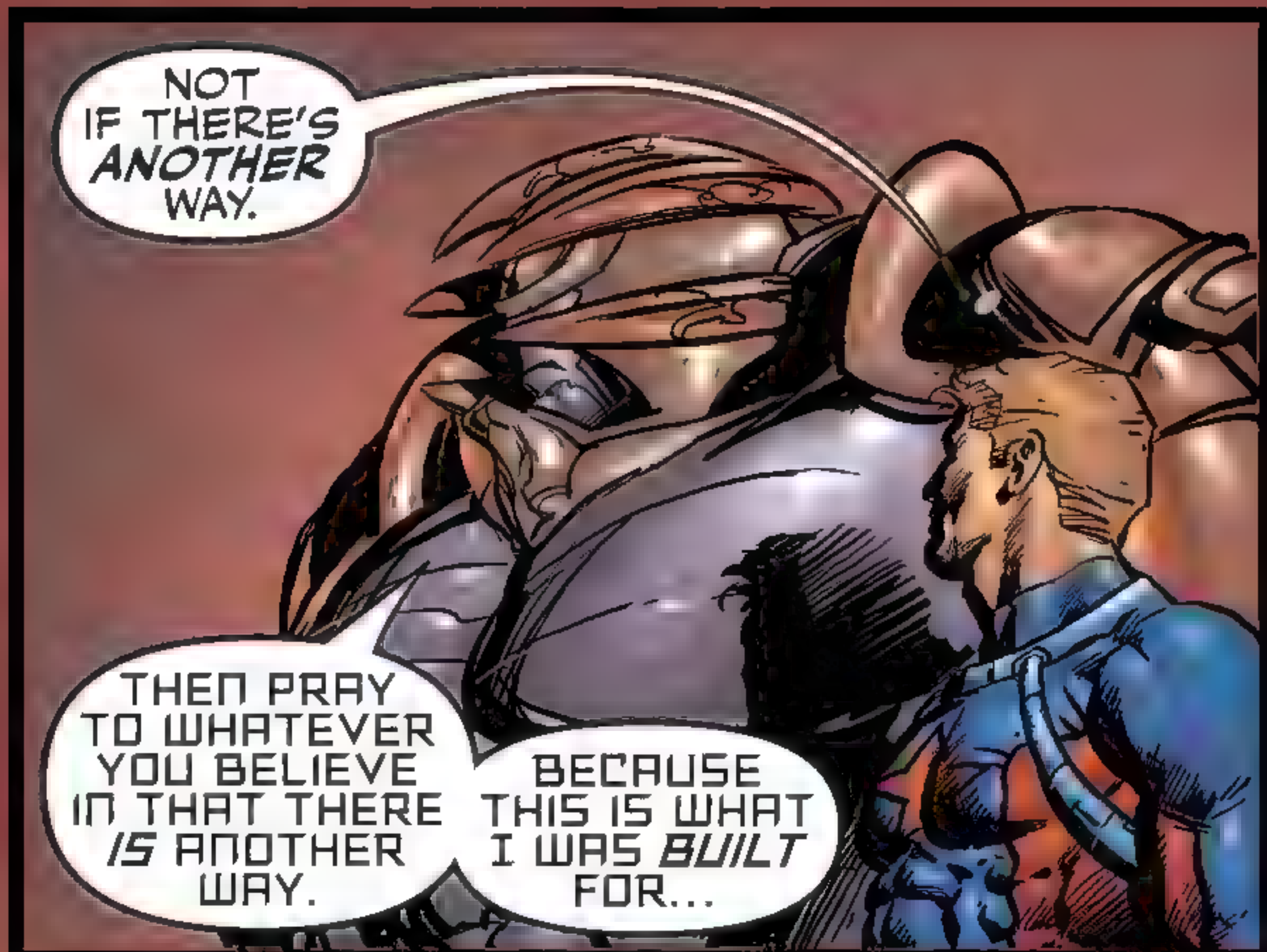
LISTEN
TO *ME*,
ARCHON...

I DON'T
KNOW *WHAT*
POWER YOU HAVE, BUT
THAT MAN DOWN THERE
UNDER THE INFLUENCE
OF THAT *CROWN* IS
MY BROTHER.



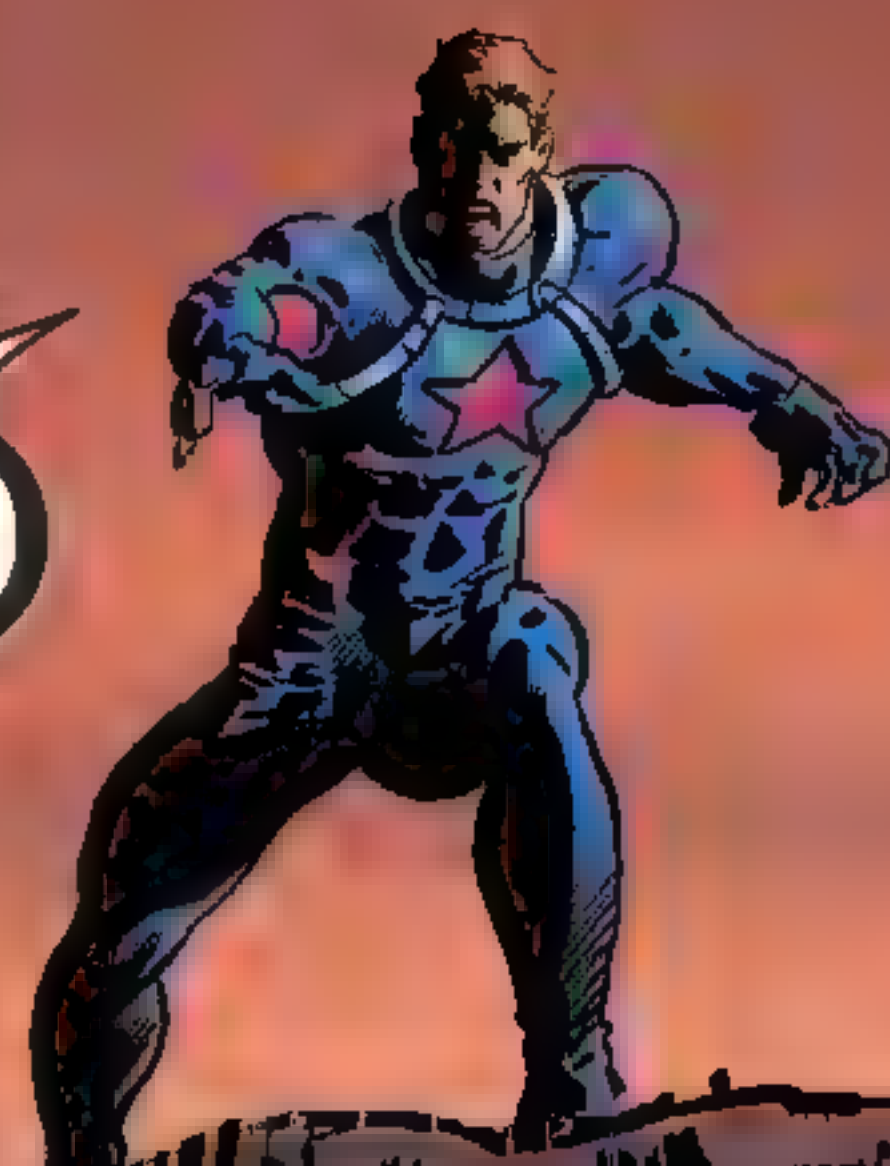
HE'S A
GOOD MAN...AND I
WON'T HAVE YOU
KILLING HIM.





...AND I *WILL* NOT TURN FROM THIS TASK!

HEY--
WAIT!









...BROKEN
ME...
I CANNOT...
REPAIR MYSELF
IN TIME...



I
THOUGHT YOU
WERE *BUILT* TO
FIGHT THESE
THINGS.

IT IS
DIFFERENT...
THIS TIME...
IT HAS NEW
POWER... FROM
YOUR BROTHER...
UNEXPECTED...



...I
CANNOT
DEFEAT
HIM... YOUR
POVA...

I
CANNOT
DEFEAT
HIM...



SOMEWHERE
OVER TEXAS

DAMN
IT!

NO NO NO NO...

I DID
NOT LOSE THEIR
FREQUENCY...

DAMN
IT...

OKAY,
SHARON...
SO WHAT
NOW?

BLOOMP

TRANSMITTING SIGNAL

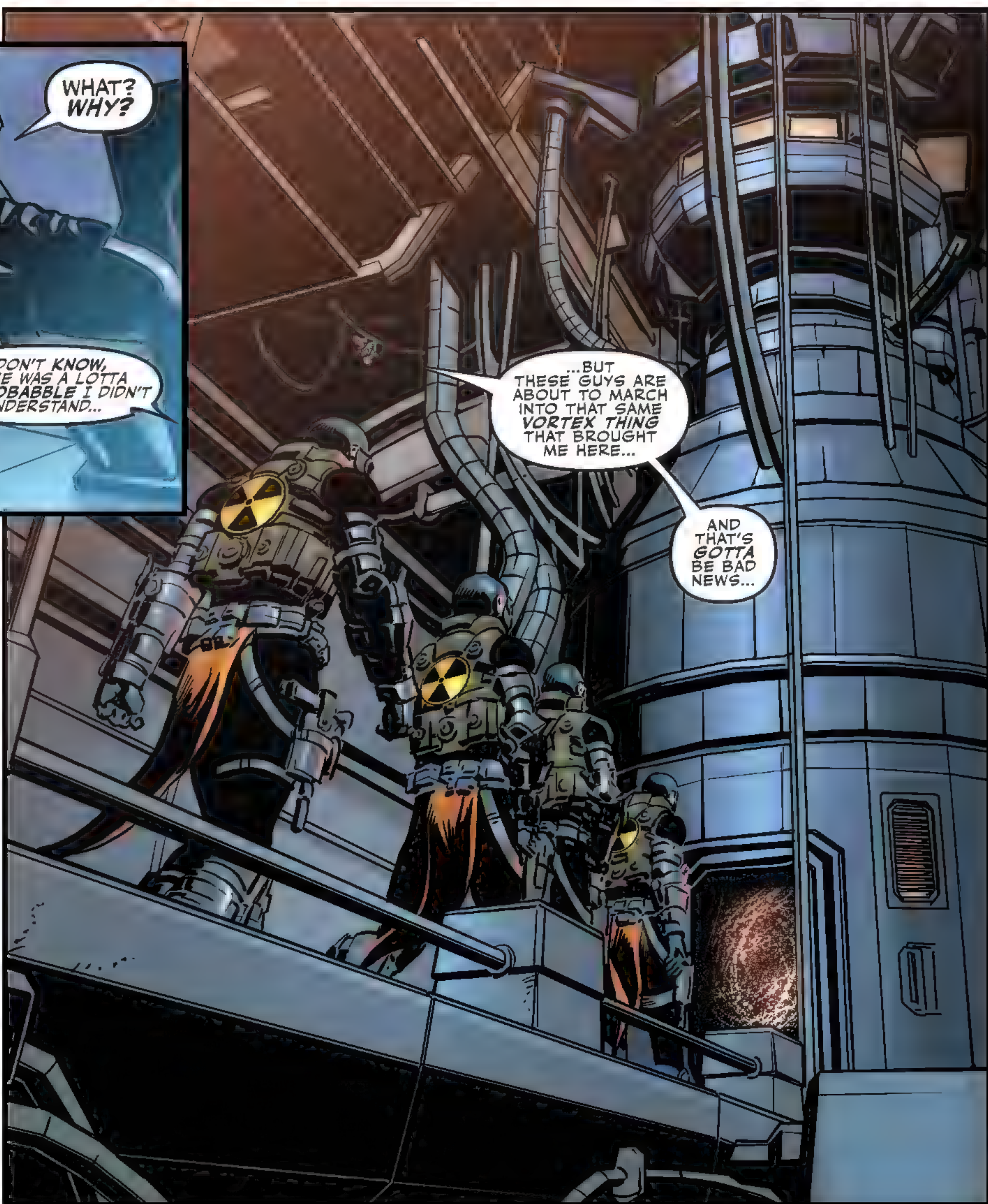
ANT-MAN

WAIT...
WHAT THE
HELL...?

ANT-MAN?

DO YOU
COPY?

OH,
THANK
FREAKING
GOD...AGENT
CARTER...



MARS

YOU'RE
SURE
THIS WILL
WORK?

YES. I'M CERTAIN I CAN
TRANSFER THE NOVA
FORCE INTO YOU.

I'M LESS CERTAIN
YOU'LL SURVIVE
THE PROCESS.

YOU
DON'T **KNOW**
ME VERY WELL,
WORLDWIND...

BUT IT REALLY
DOESN'T **MATTER**,
ANYWAY...

NO...
BECAUSE
IF YOU... DO
NOT **SUCCEED**,
COMMANDER...
THEN **ALL** OF
IT ENDS...

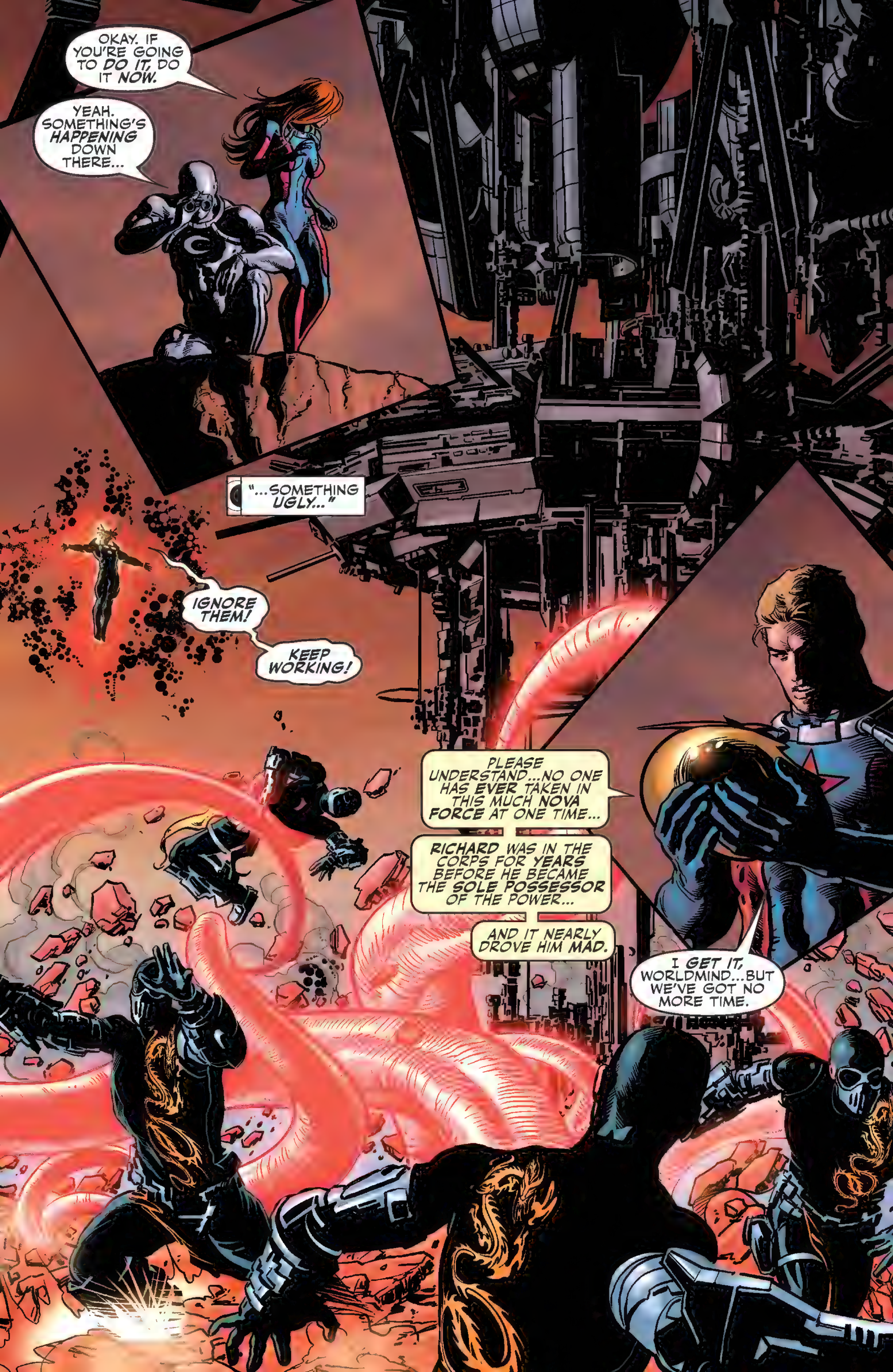
THE ENTIRE
UNIVERSE.

SO, YOU
KNOW...**NO**
PRESSURE.

IF THAT... **THING...**
HADN'T FORCED
ME OUT OF
RICHARD'S MIND...

IT **SHOULDN'T**
HAVE COME TO
THIS, COMMANDER
ROGERS.

NO, IT
SHOULDN'T...



OKAY. IF
YOU'RE GOING
TO DO IT, DO
IT NOW.

YEAH.
SOMETHING'S
HAPPENING
DOWN
THERE...

"...SOMETHING
UGLY..."

IGNORE
THEM!

KEEP
WORKING!

PLEASE
UNDERSTAND...NO ONE
HAS EVER TAKEN IN
THIS MUCH NOVA
FORCE AT ONE TIME...

RICHARD WAS IN THE
CORPS FOR YEARS
BEFORE HE BECAME
THE SOLE POSSESSOR
OF THE POWER...

AND IT NEARLY
DROVE HIM MAD.

I GET IT,
WORLDMIND...BUT
WE'VE GOT NO
MORE TIME.





I'LL BE HERE TO
GUIDE YOU, COMMANDER...
IF YOU NEED ME.

THANKS,
WORLDMIND...

THE REST OF
YOU...REMEMBER
THE PLAN...

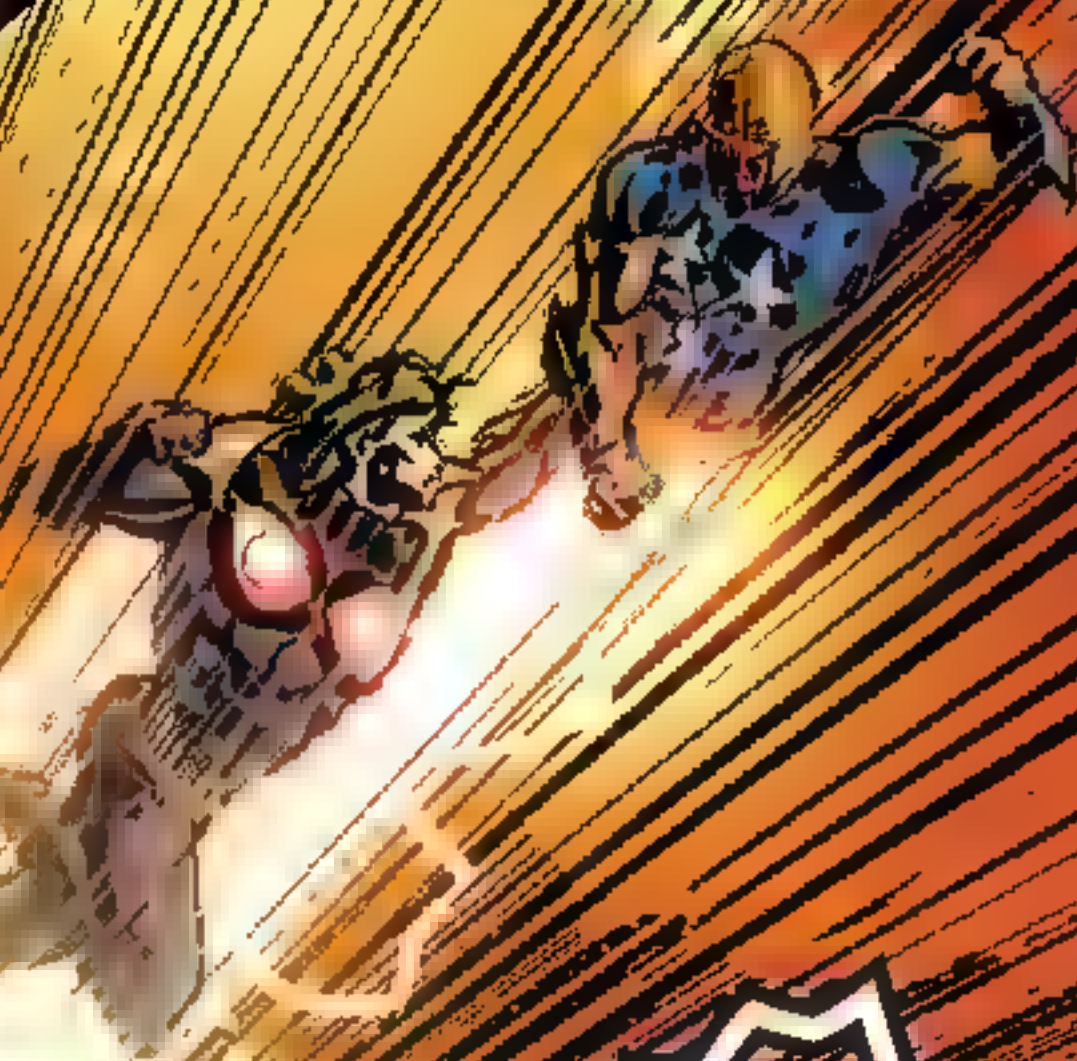
...WE'VE
GOT A
UNIVERSE
TO SAVE.

THIEVES...

SO,
LET'S
GO!



THIEVES!



KATFOOOOM

I'M
GOING TO
DESTROY
YOU,
INSECT!

WE'LL
SEE.



AND YOU'LL *SEE* TO IT, AGENT FURY?

OF COURSE, DIRECTOR THORNDRAKE.

I'D STAY AND OVERSEE THE TASK MYSELF...

...BUT I CAN'T *STAND* THE IDEA OF GIVING UP OUR LAST *LINK* TO MARS...

WE WERE *BORN* THERE, IN MOST OF THE WAYS THAT MATTER...

I KNOW, SIR...BUT WITH ROGERS AND HIS PEOPLE *THERE* AND THE THIRD *CROWN* ACTIVATED...

...DO WE HAVE ANOTHER OPTION?

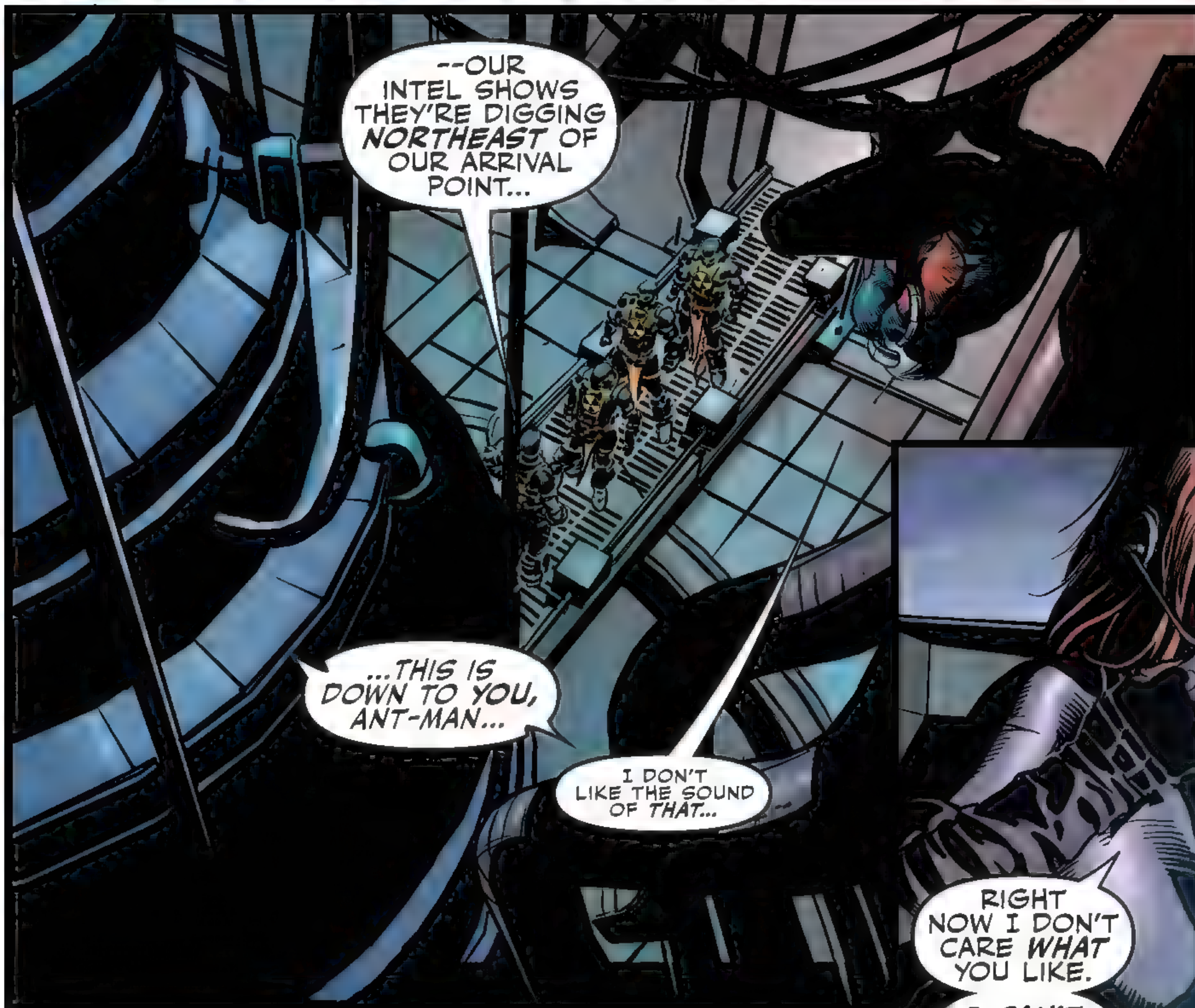
NOT ONE THAT DOESN'T RISK THE BEAST'S AWAKENING...

IN ANY CASE, I'M OFF TO SHOW OUR ACQUISITION TO THE OTHERS, BEFORE IT GOES INTO THE VAULT...

I'LL EXPECT YOUR REPORT WHEN I RETURN.

OF COURSE, DIRECTOR.

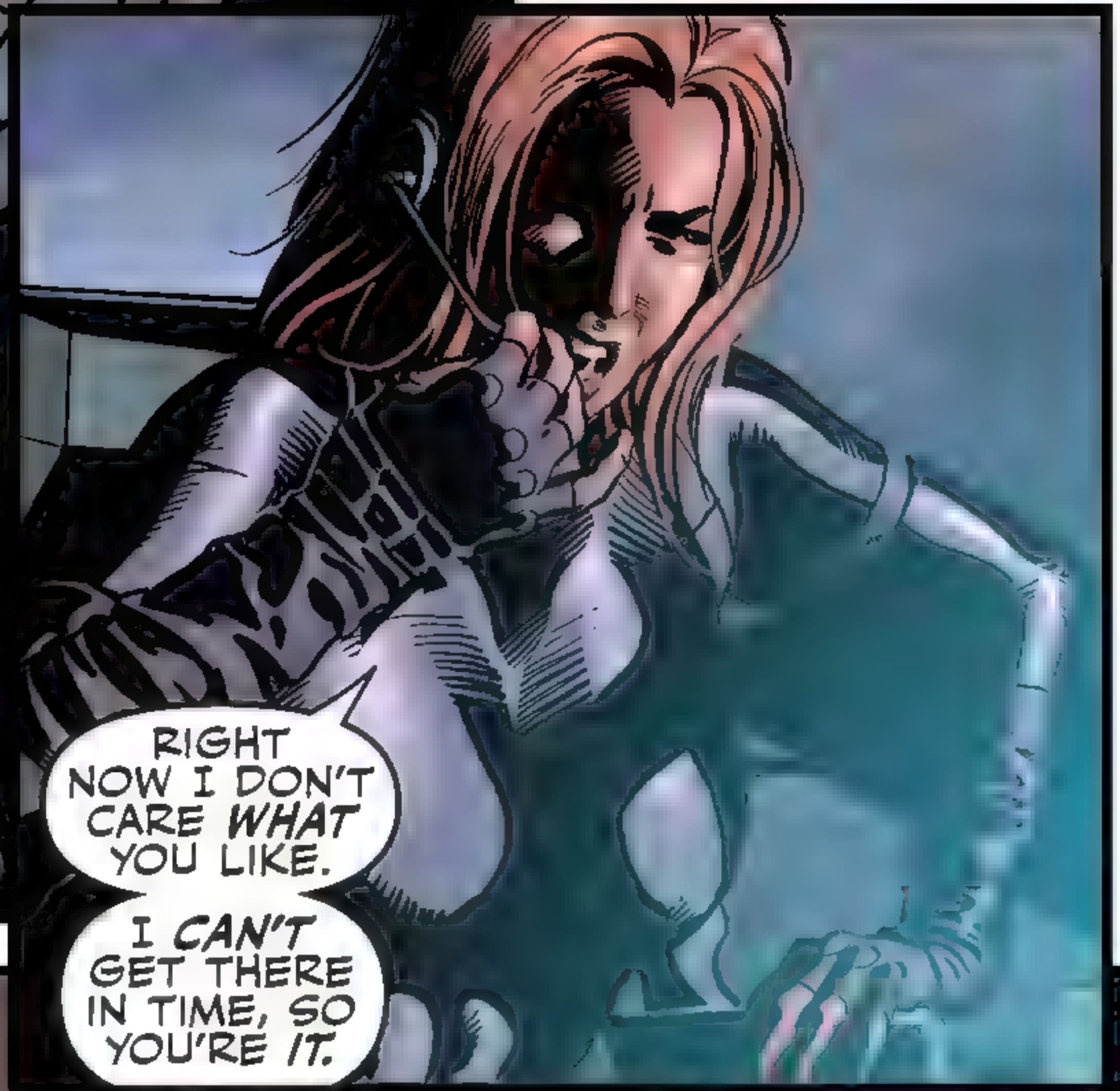
"LISTEN TO ME..."



--OUR
INTEL SHOWS
THEY'RE DIGGING
NORTHEAST OF
OUR ARRIVAL
POINT...

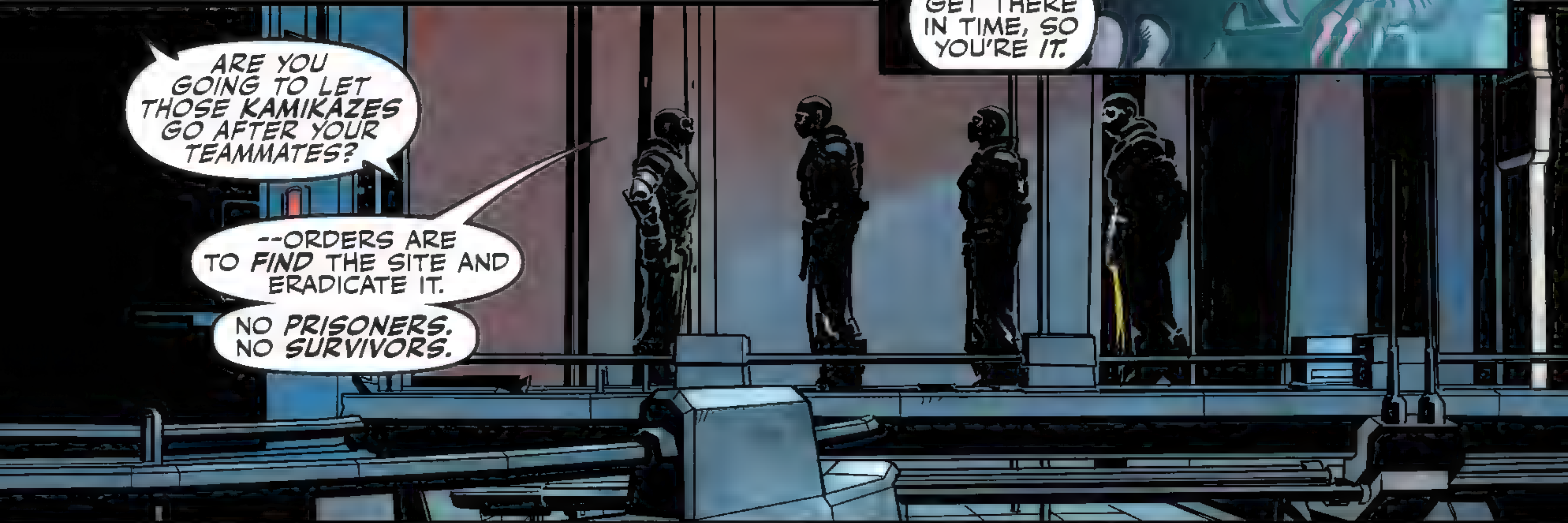
...THIS IS
DOWN TO YOU,
ANT-MAN...

I DON'T
LIKE THE SOUND
OF THAT...



RIGHT
NOW I DON'T
CARE *WHAT*
YOU LIKE.

I *CAN'T*
GET THERE
IN TIME, SO
YOU'RE IT.



ARE YOU
GOING TO LET
THOSE KAMIKAZES
GO AFTER YOUR
TEAMMATES?

--ORDERS ARE
TO *FIND* THE SITE AND
ERADICATE IT.

NO *PRISONERS*.
NO *SURVIVORS*.



OR ARE
YOU GOING
TO STOP
THEM?

...ALL RIGHT...
ALL RIGHT...



...I'M
GOIN' IN.

NOW
GET MOVING,
SOLDIERS!



BUT I'M NOT SURE
WHAT WEAPONS WILL
DO THE TRICK
HERE...

CAN'T TELL IF
THESE TENTACLES
ARE ALIVE OR
WHAT...CAN'T GET
A READ...

BAHH!
THEY HAVE
ME!
I
FEEL THEIR
TOUCH IN MY
MIND!

DISGUSTING
THINGS! NOT
AN ASGARDIAN,
YOU DON'T!

BRING DOWN THE
MACHINE! IT'S
THE ONLY WAY!

YOU *SEE*,
INSECT? YOUR
PEOPLE ARE
ALREADY A
PART OF THE
ABYSS.

SOON
THEY WILL
BE MY
PEOPLE...

LIKE
HELL THEY
WILL.

HA
HA HA
HA HA
HA HA
HA...

WAT HOO

COME ON,
RICH, I KNOW
YOU'RE IN
THERE!

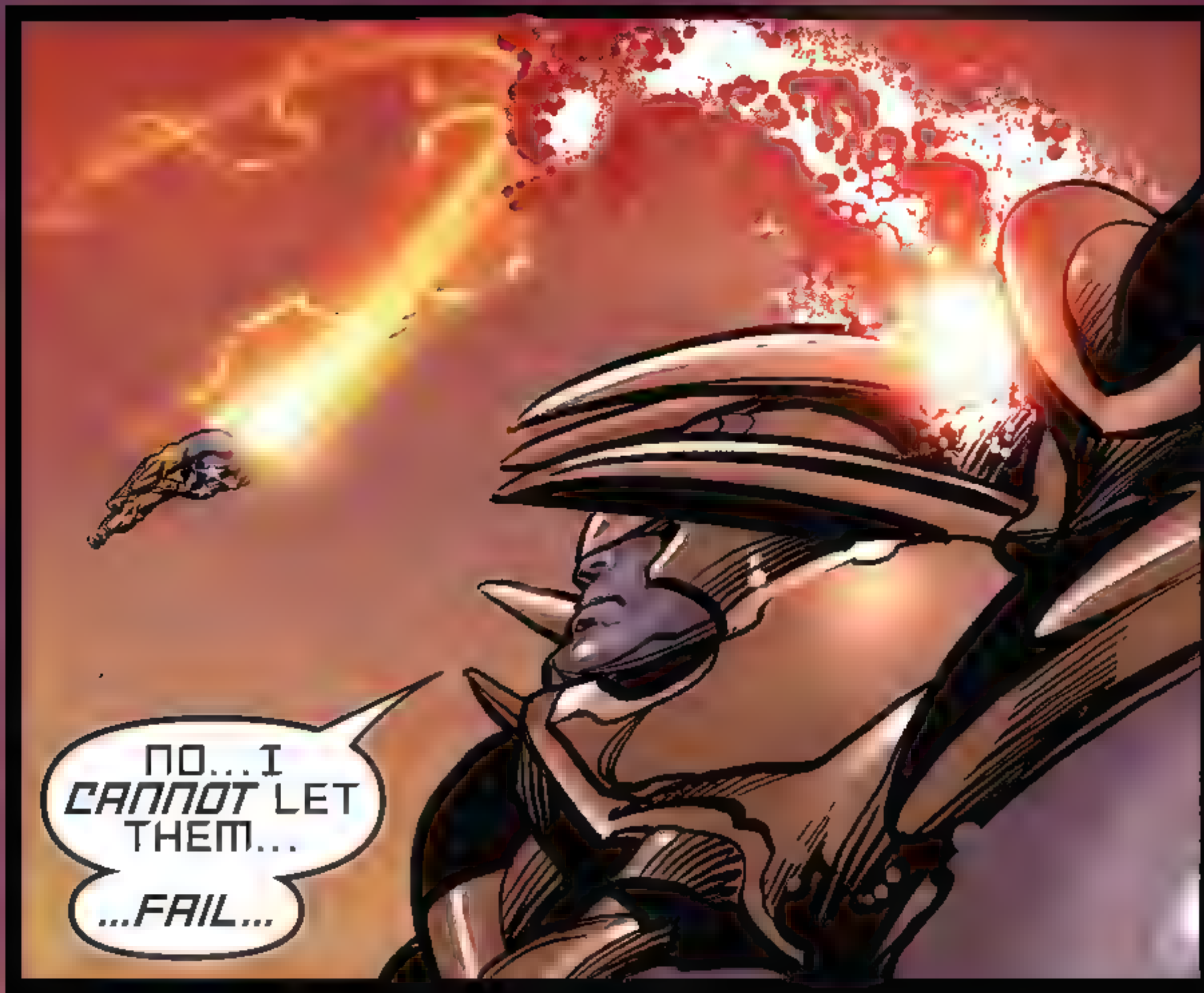
WAKE
UP! FIGHT
THIS!

HA HA...
PATHETIC...

PATHETIC!

UHH--





NO... I
CANNOT LET
THEM...
...FAIL...



DAMN
FREAKIN'
MOTHER-
#@\$\$@\$\$!

BZAPPAAN
RATATATATATAT



IT IS *NOT*
YOUR TIME,
DARK SON!

ZZAAST

THANKS...
THAT WAS
GETTING--

GO. HELP
THE *GODDESS*...
STOP THE
MACHINE...

I WILL
HOLD HIS
DARK REACH
AT BAY... WITH
WHATEVER IS
LEFT OF
ME...



MEANWHILE...

KEEP IT TOGETHER,
O'GRADY... THEY'RE ALL
COUNTING ON YOU...

STAY FOCUSED...
REMEMBER HOW
THIS FELT LAST
TIME...

WHAT IT FELT LIKE WHEN
YOU WERE NEAR THE EXIT...

YOU'RE ALMOST
THERE... ALMOST...

OH
GOD...

...THEY'RE
RIGHT BEHIND
ME...

YOU KNOW WHAT YOU
HAVE TO DO, ERIC. THE
WASP STING THEY
ADDED TO THE SUIT.

WELL...
YOU MORONS
WANTED TO BLOW
YOURSELVES
UP...

...SO
DO IT.



OH GOD
OH GOD
OH GOD
OH GOD

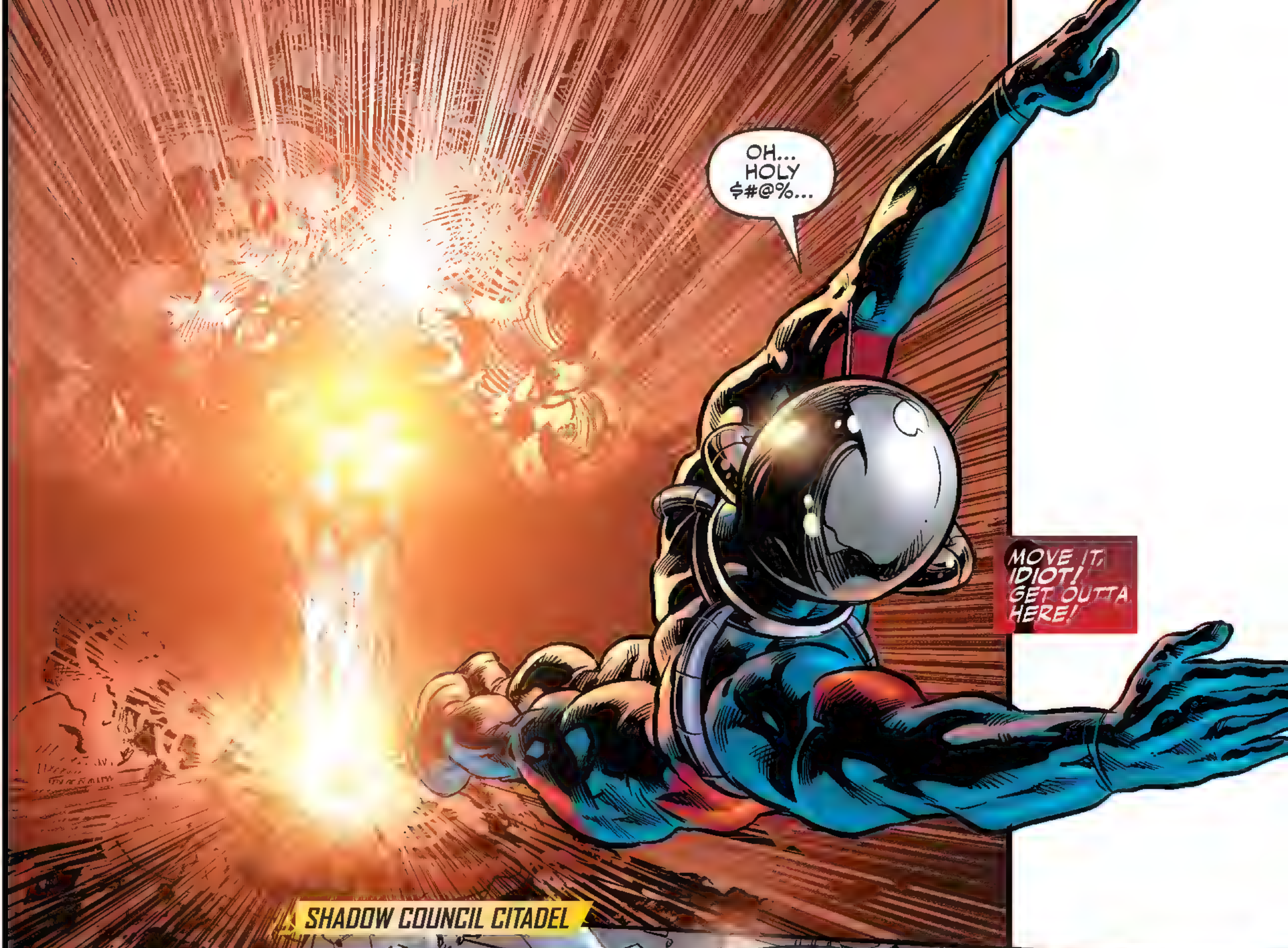


OH GOD
OH GOD
OH GOD
OH GOD



YES!
ALIVE!





OH...
HOLY
¢#@%...

MOVE IT,
IDIOT!
GET OUTTA
HERE!

SHADOW COUNCIL CITADEL



WHAT THE
HELL'S GOIN'
ON?!

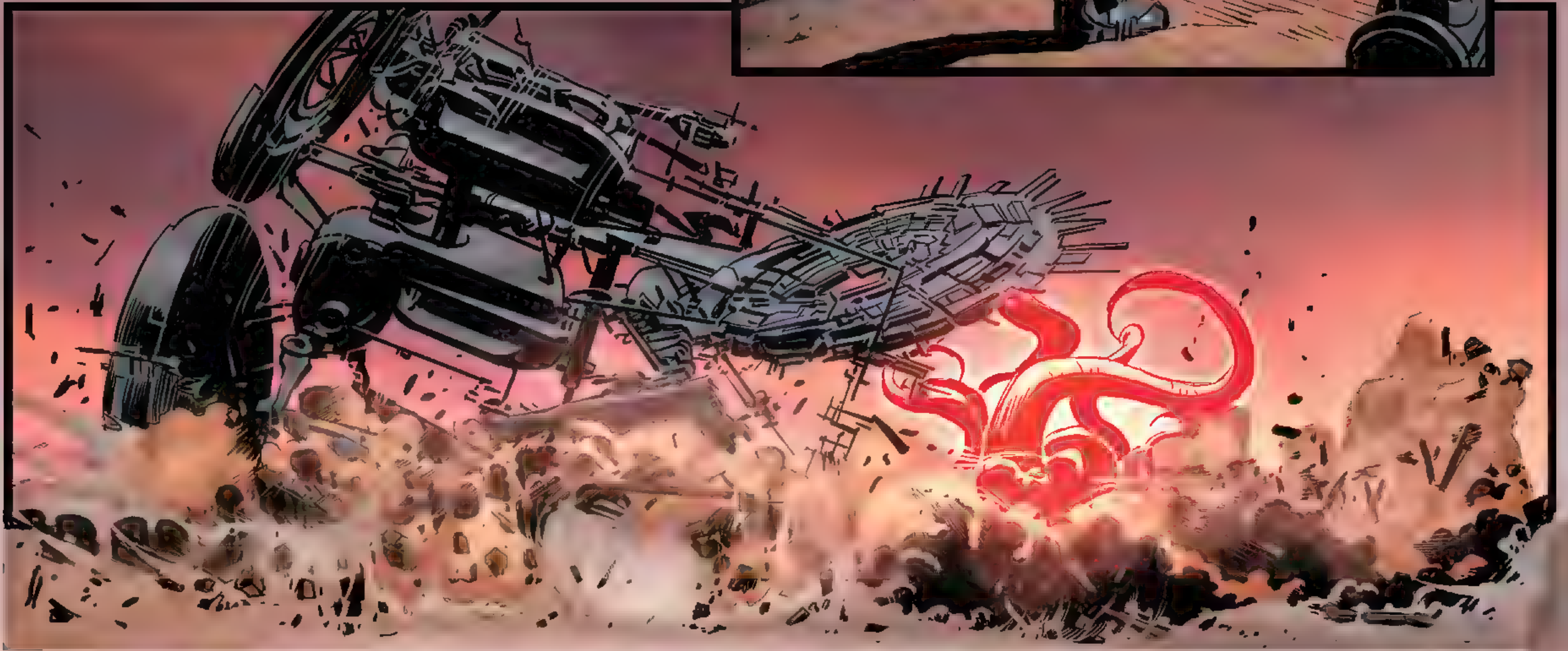
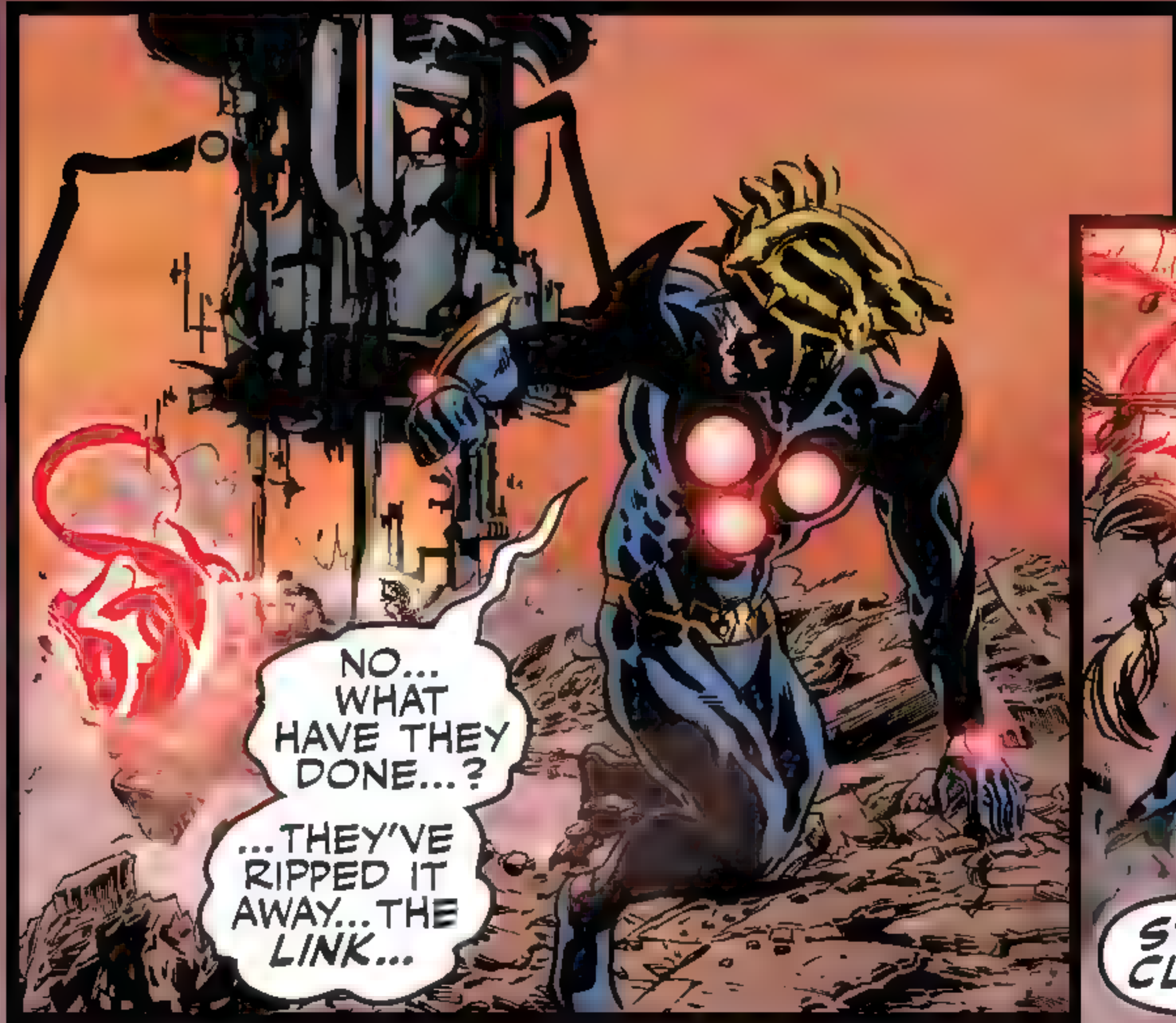
THE
VANISHING POINT IS
COLLAPSING!

AND
IT'S TAKING
THE WHOLE
BUILDING
WITH IT!



WHOA...SOME-
THING BIG
JUST BLEW.

MY SCANNERS
ARE OFF THE
CHARTS.



AAAAHHHHHHH!





UFFF

...I'LL
KILL YOU
ALL... FOR
THIS...

NOO!
NOO!

IT'S
OVER!

YOU
LOSE!

NOOOOOO!

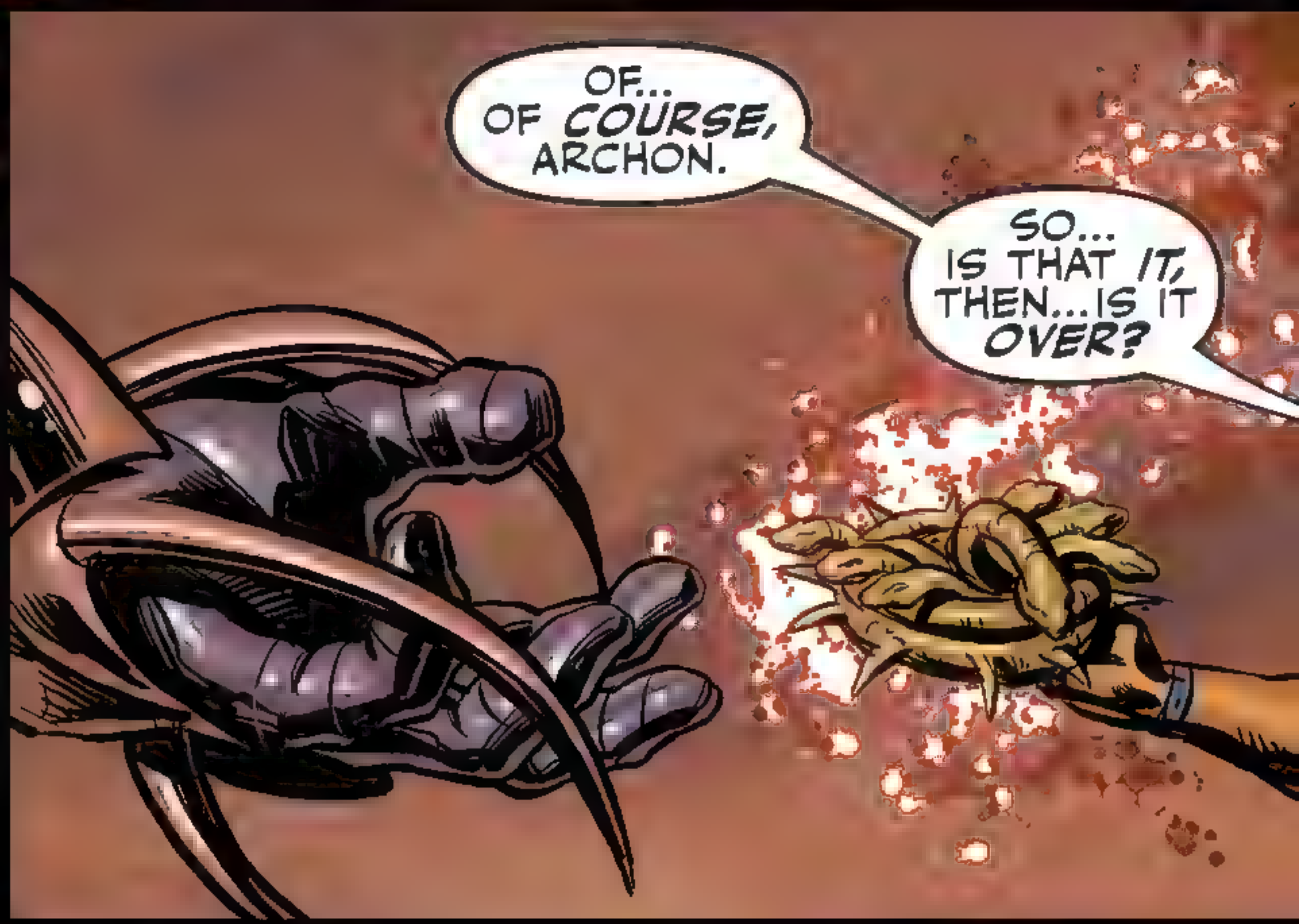


COMMANDER!



DO *NOT*
LOOK AT IT...
PLEASE...

JUST
GIVE IT
TO *ME*.



OF...
OF *COURSE*,
ARCHON.

SO...
IS THAT *IT*,
THEN...IS IT
OVER?



YES. WE HAVE
STOPPED HIS
AWAKENING FOR
NOW...

I WILL TAKE
THE THORNED
CROWN
SOMEWHERE
SAFER...

SOMEWHERE
HIS FOLLOWERS
CANNOT *ENSHRINE*
IT.



HANK,
HOW IS
HE?

HIS VITALS ARE
STRONG...UNLIKE HIS
FOLLOWERS...

...THEY
ALL DROPPED
DEAD WHEN
HE LOST HIS
POWER.

LIKE A
PUPPET WHOSE
STRINGS WERE
CUT.



AND WHAT'S
THE OXYGEN
SITUATION, WAR
MACHINE?

ATMOSPHERE
HAS LOST
TEN PERCENT
OF IT IN THE
LAST FIVE
MINUTES...

YOU PEOPLE
NEED TO BE
READY TO
GET YOUR
HELMETS ON
AGAIN.



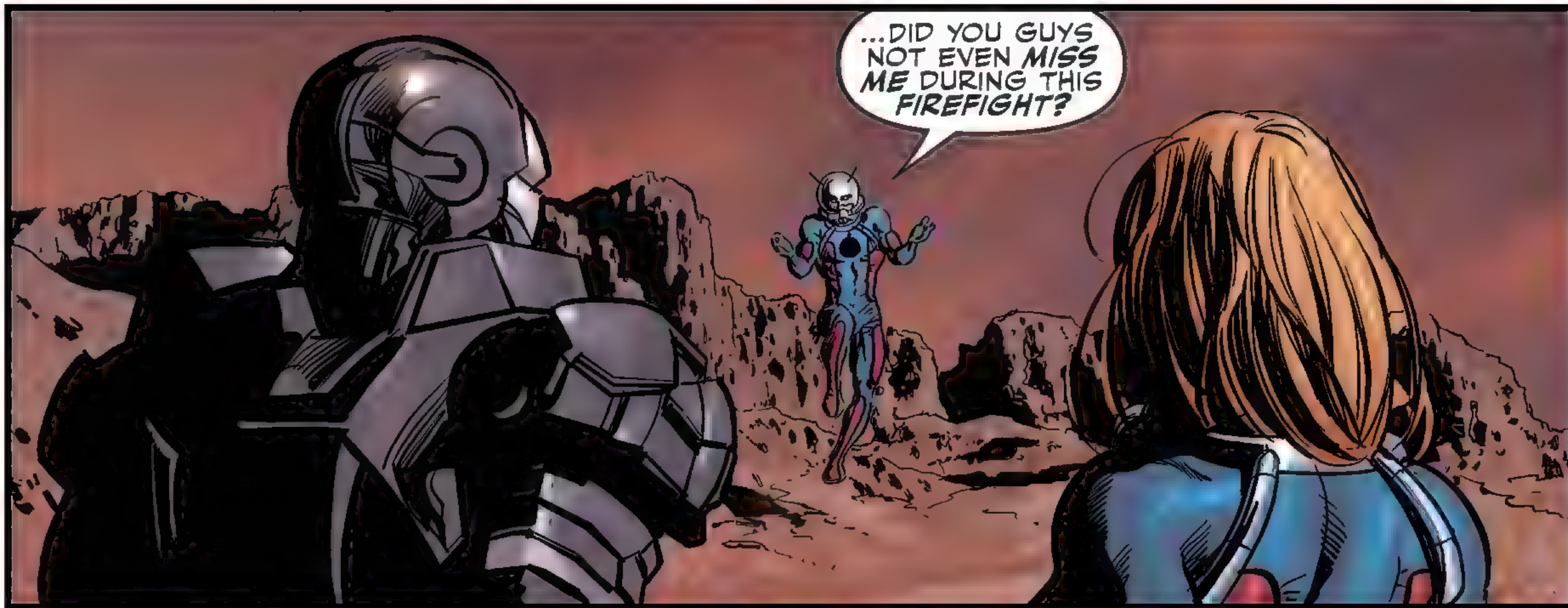
SO LET'S GO
HOME THEN...I'M
SICK TO DEATH
OF THIS COLD
ROCK.

WE'VE
STILL GOT
A MISSING
TEAMMATE
TO FIND,
NATASHA...

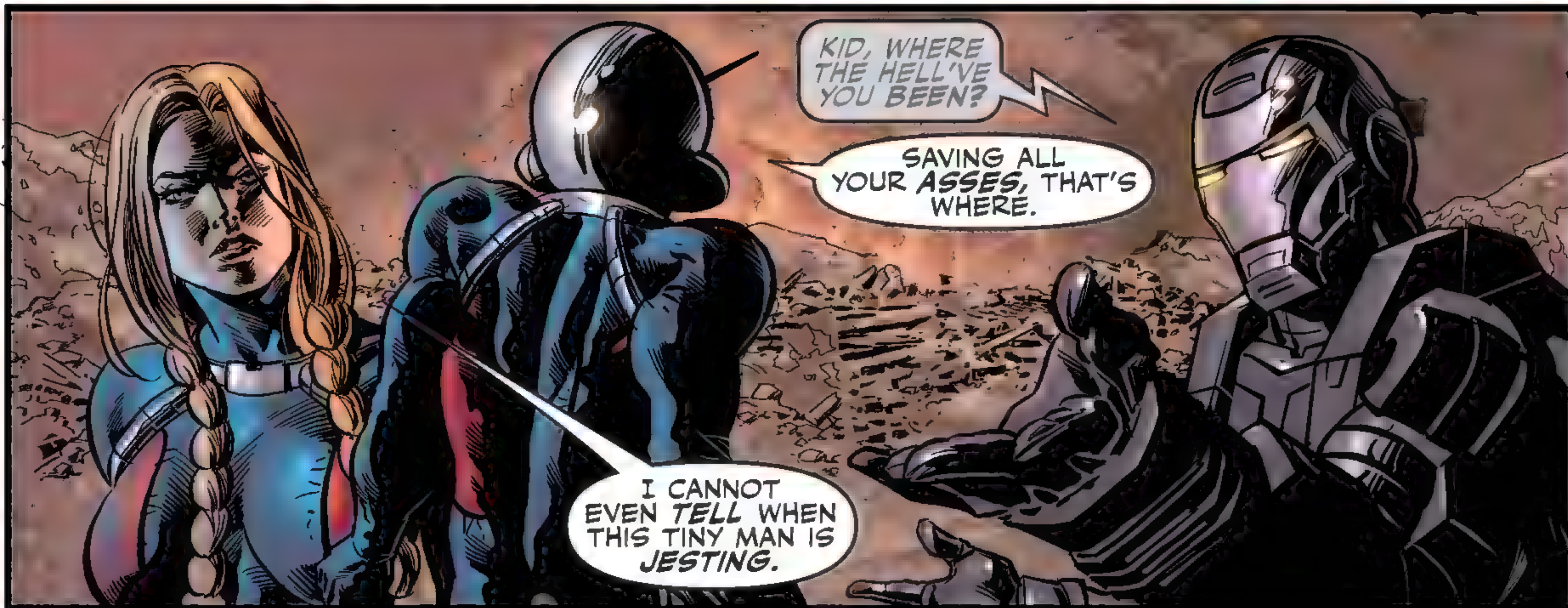


MISSING?
WHO'S
MISSING?

AW,
C'MON...



...DID YOU GUYS
NOT EVEN MISS
ME DURING THIS
FIREFIGHT?



KID, WHERE
THE HELL'VE
YOU BEEN?

SAVING ALL
YOUR ASSES, THAT'S
WHERE.

I CANNOT
EVEN TELL WHEN
THIS TINY MAN IS
JESTING.



I'M
SERIOUS...

SURE.

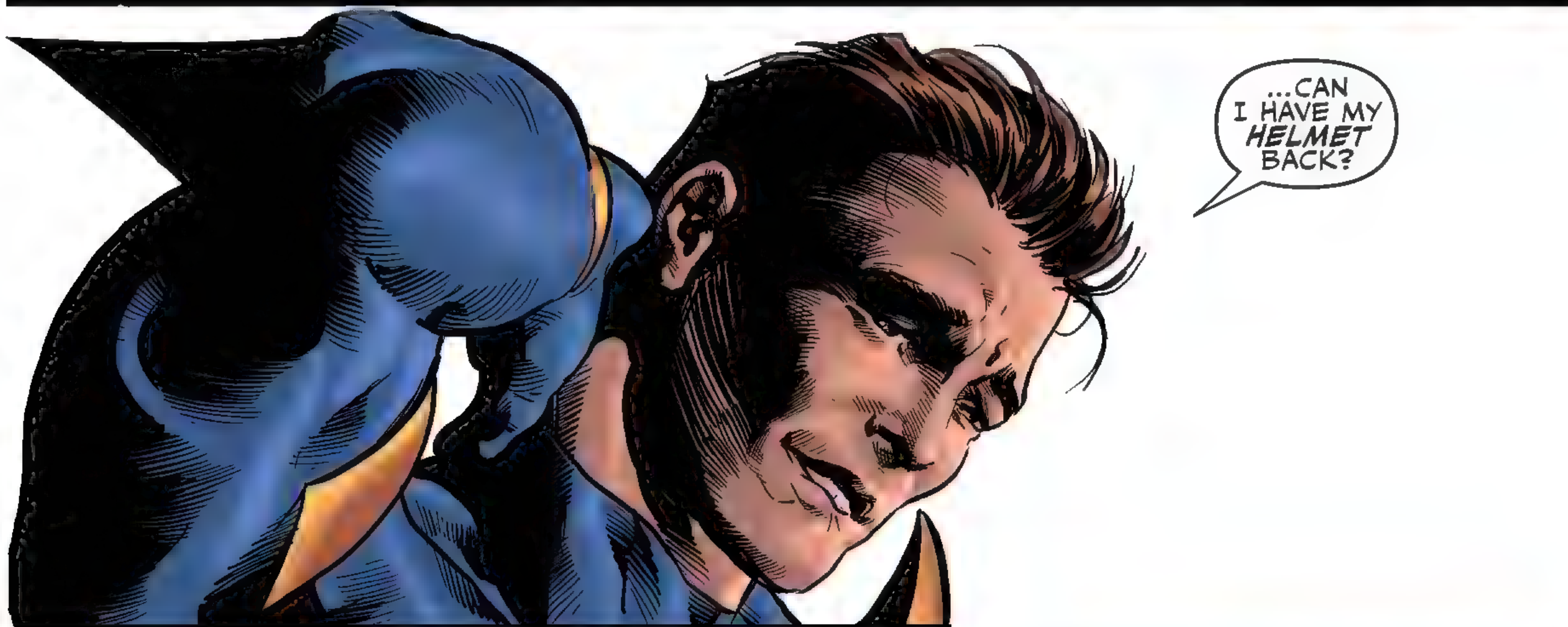
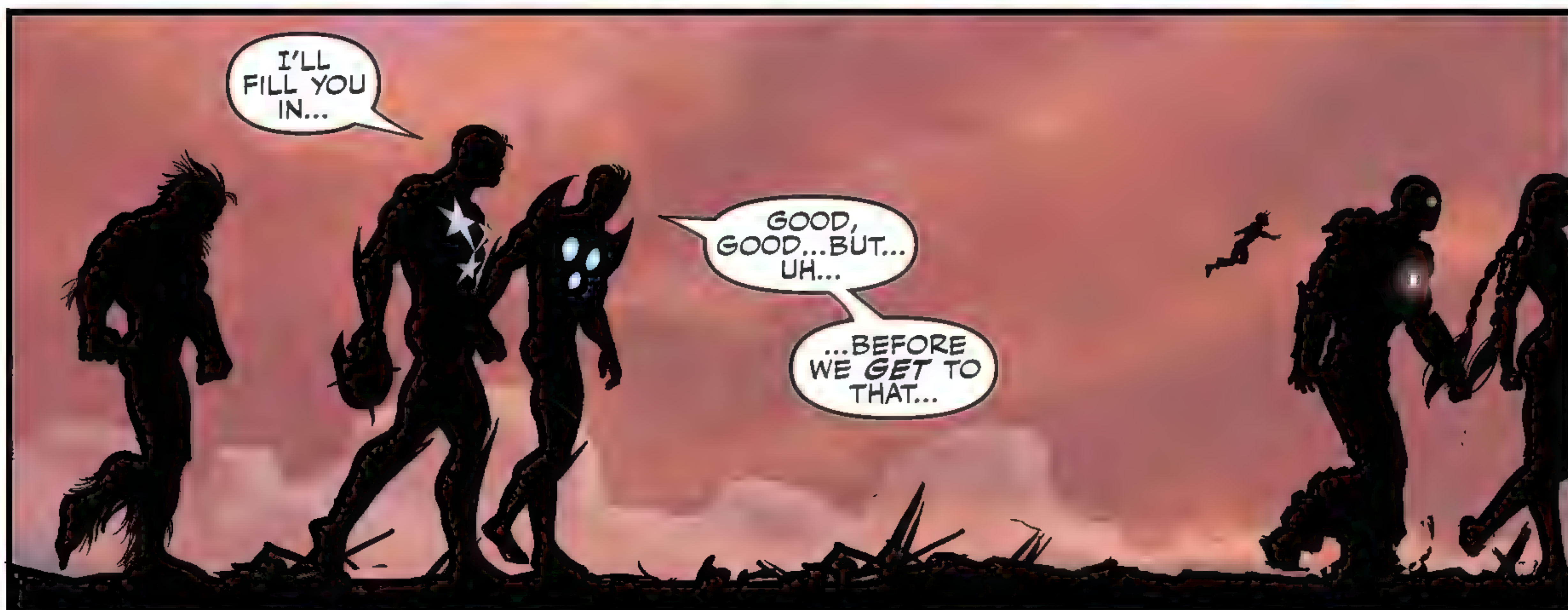
DUDE! ASK
SHARON WHEN
WE GET HOME...
SHE'LL TOTALLY
VERIFY...



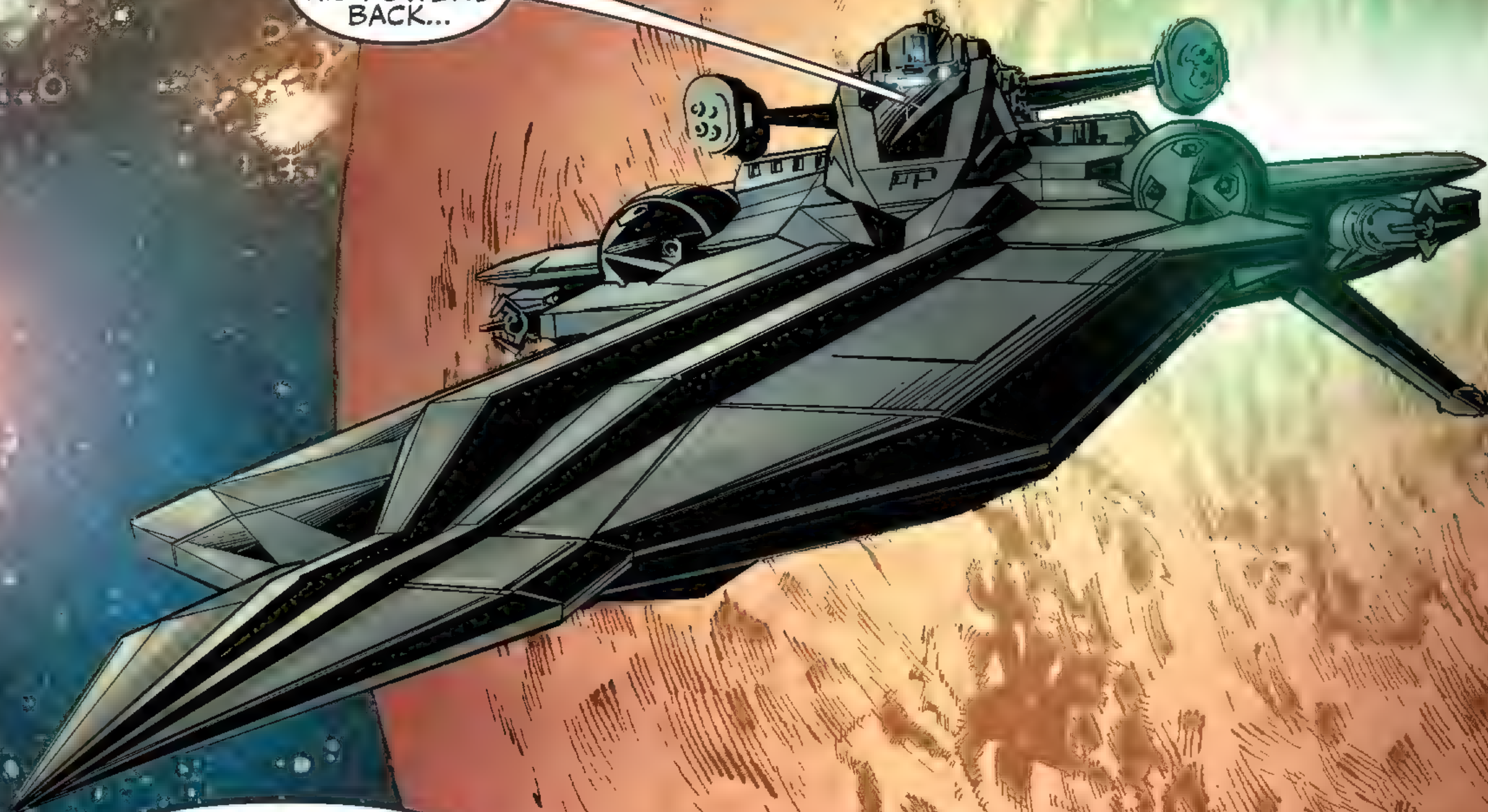
ALL RIGHT,
AVENGERS...
LET'S HEAD
HOME.



UH, CAP..
STEVE?



--OF COURSE THE MINUTE **WORLD MIND** TRANSFERRED HIS **POWERS** BACK...



...HE GOT A **DISTRESS CALL** FROM THE **GUARDIANS** AND TOOK OFF.

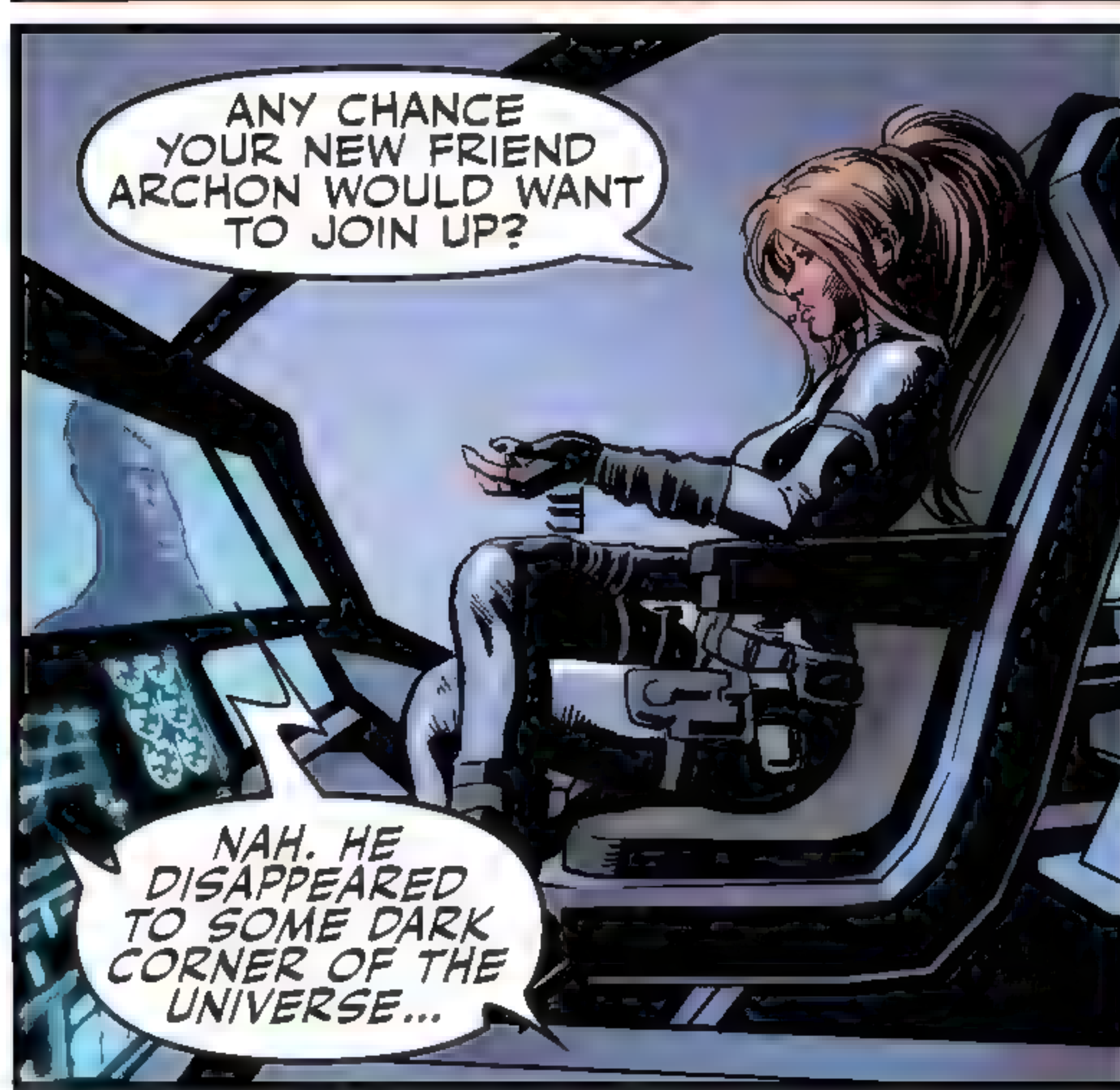
I'M NOT SURE NOVA IS GOING TO BE **AVAILABLE** ENOUGH AS A RESOURCE FOR US.



I'LL START DOING **BACKGROUNDS** ON OTHER **COSMIC-LEVEL** HEROES...

ANY CHANCE YOUR NEW FRIEND **ARCHON** WOULD WANT TO JOIN UP?

NAH. HE **DISAPPEARED** TO SOME **DARK** CORNER OF THE **UNIVERSE**...



BUT THE **INTEL** WE GOT FROM HIM ON THE **OTHER CROWNS** WAS WORTH IT.

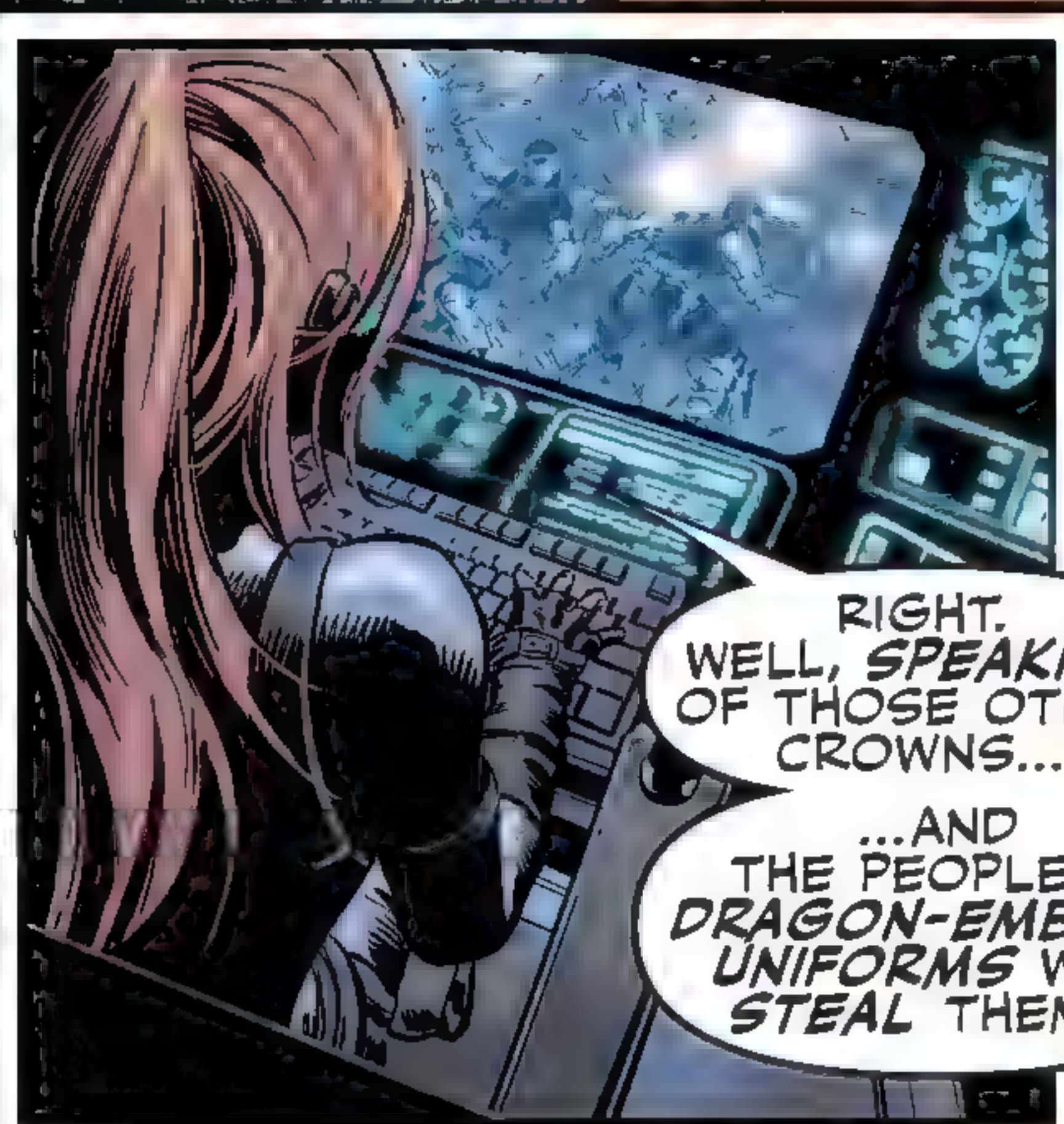
WORTH **SAVING THE UNIVERSE**?

WORTH **GETTING MY HEAD BEAT IN**, I MEANT.



RIGHT. WELL, **SPEAKING** OF THOSE **OTHER CROWNS**...

...AND THE **PEOPLE IN DRAGON-EMBLEM UNIFORMS** WHO **STEAL THEM**...





I'VE
BEEN LOOKING
AT **SAT FOOTAGE**
FROM THE BUILDING
ANT-MAN TOOK
DOWN IN TEXAS
ALL DAY...

...AND I HATE
TO TELL YOU
THIS AND SPOIL
YOUR **VICTORY**
PARTY...

...BUT
WE'VE GOT
BIG PROBLEMS
BACK HERE
ON EARTH.





FIVE YEARS AGO.



THEY'RE WATCHING. I CAN FEEL IT.



I CAN'T SEE 'EM...

«PAPER, SIR?»

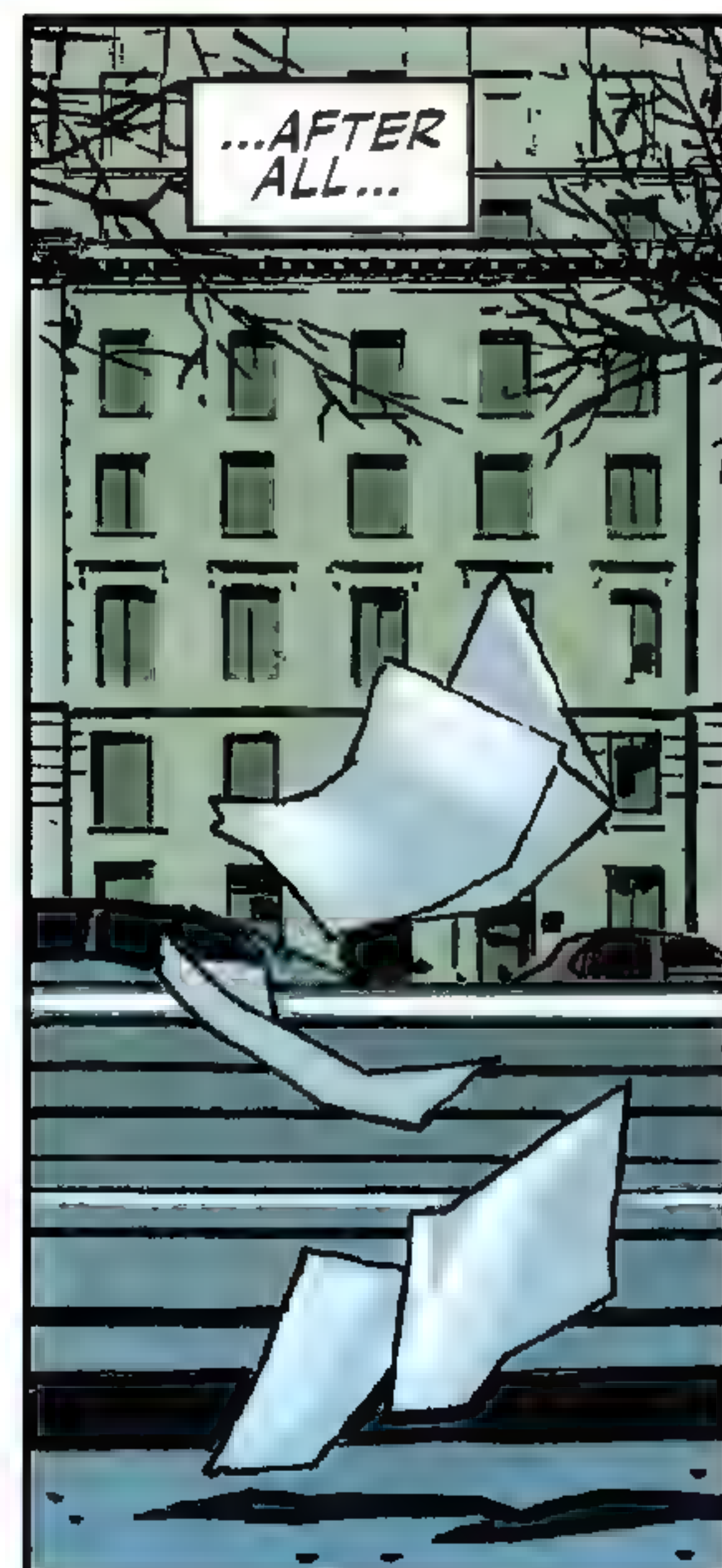
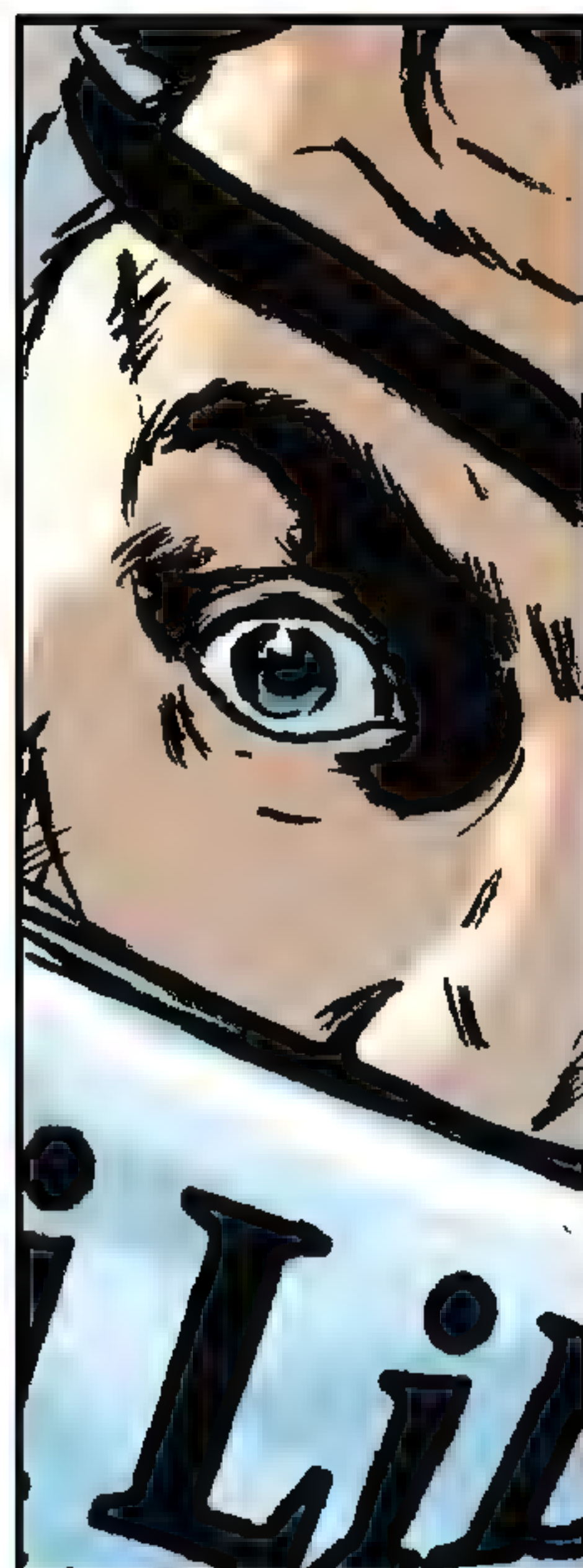
«SURE, PAL...KEEP THE CHANGE.»



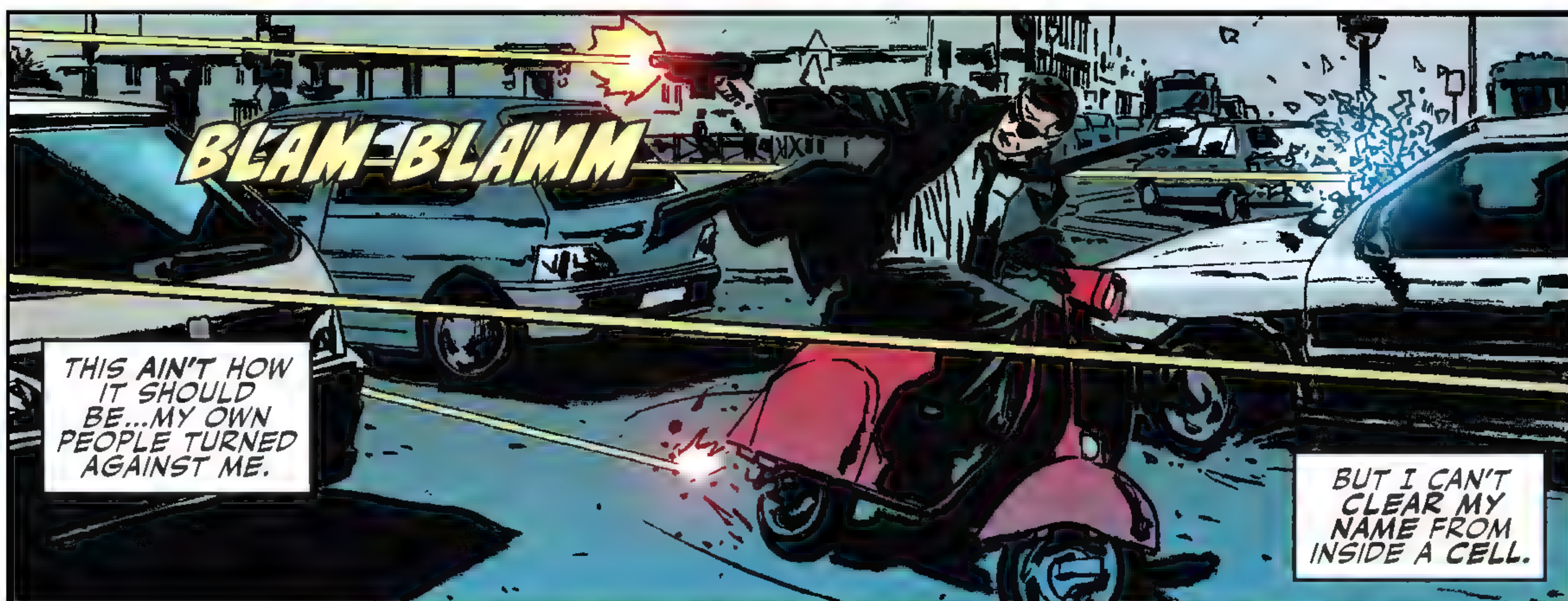
...BUT ALL MY TRAINING AND EVERY INSTINCT IN MY GUT TELLS ME THEY'RE HERE.



ANYWAY, I KNEW I COULDN'T STAY OFF THE RADAR FOREVER...



...AFTER ALL...





WON'T BE ABLE TO
SHAKE THEM FOR LONG.



SO WHERE DO I
VANISH TO NEXT?



MOROCCO IS NICE
THIS TIME OF YEAR...



AND I MIGHT FIND
ANSWERS THERE...



IF ONLY I COULD
REMEMBER WHY
THE HELL THEY'RE
AFTER ME...

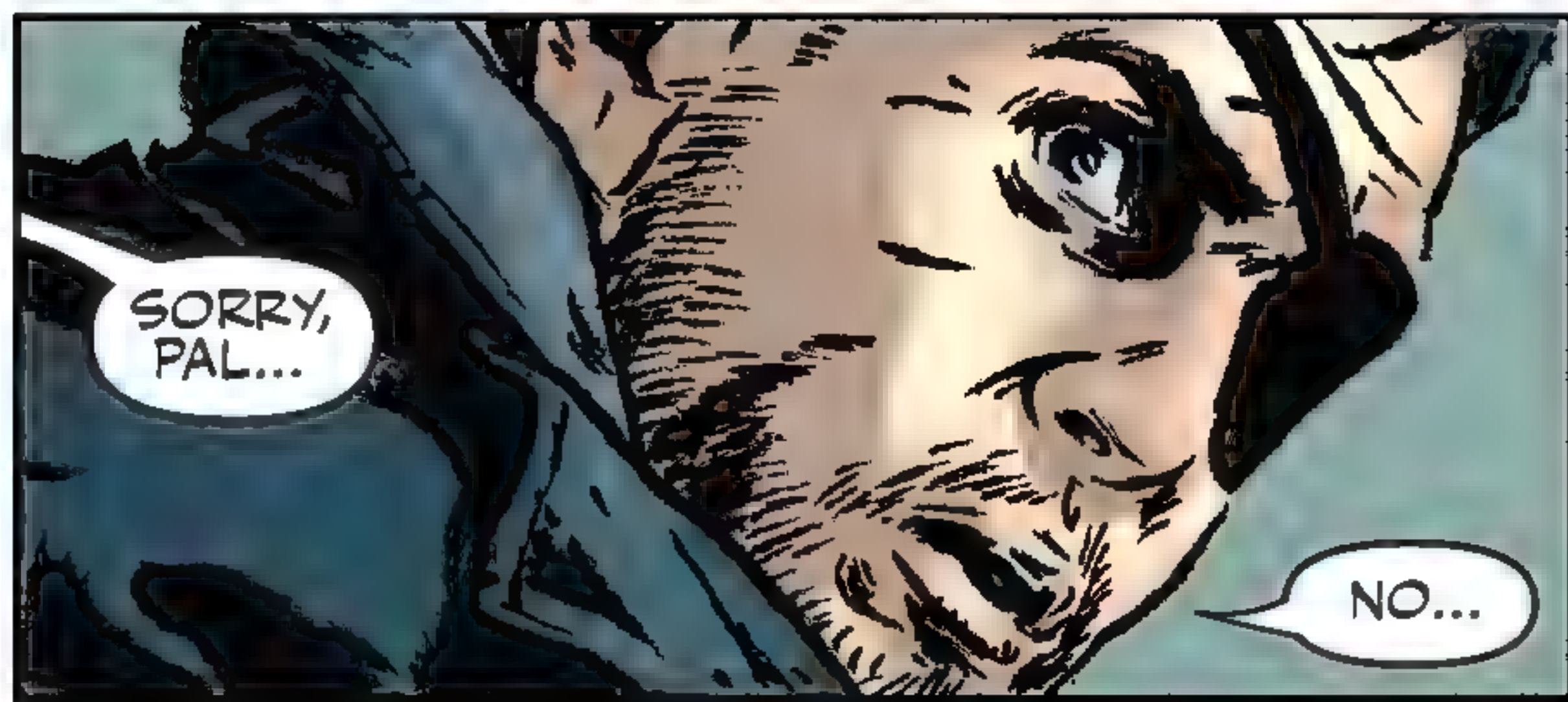


WHAT THE HECK I'M
SUPPOSED TO HAVE--



--DONE...

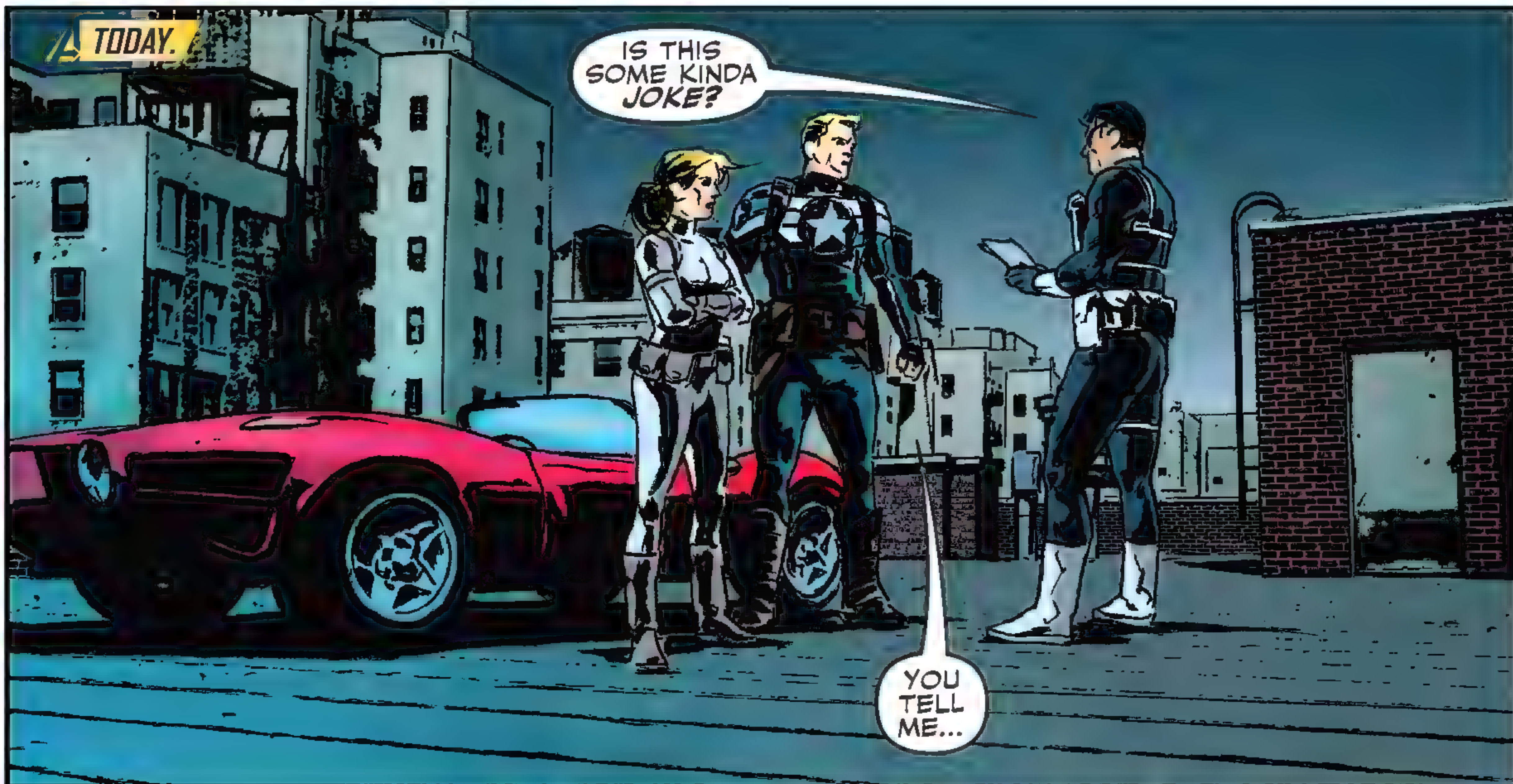
UHHT--



...BUT
THIS IS FOR
YOUR OWN
GOOD...

NOOOO!

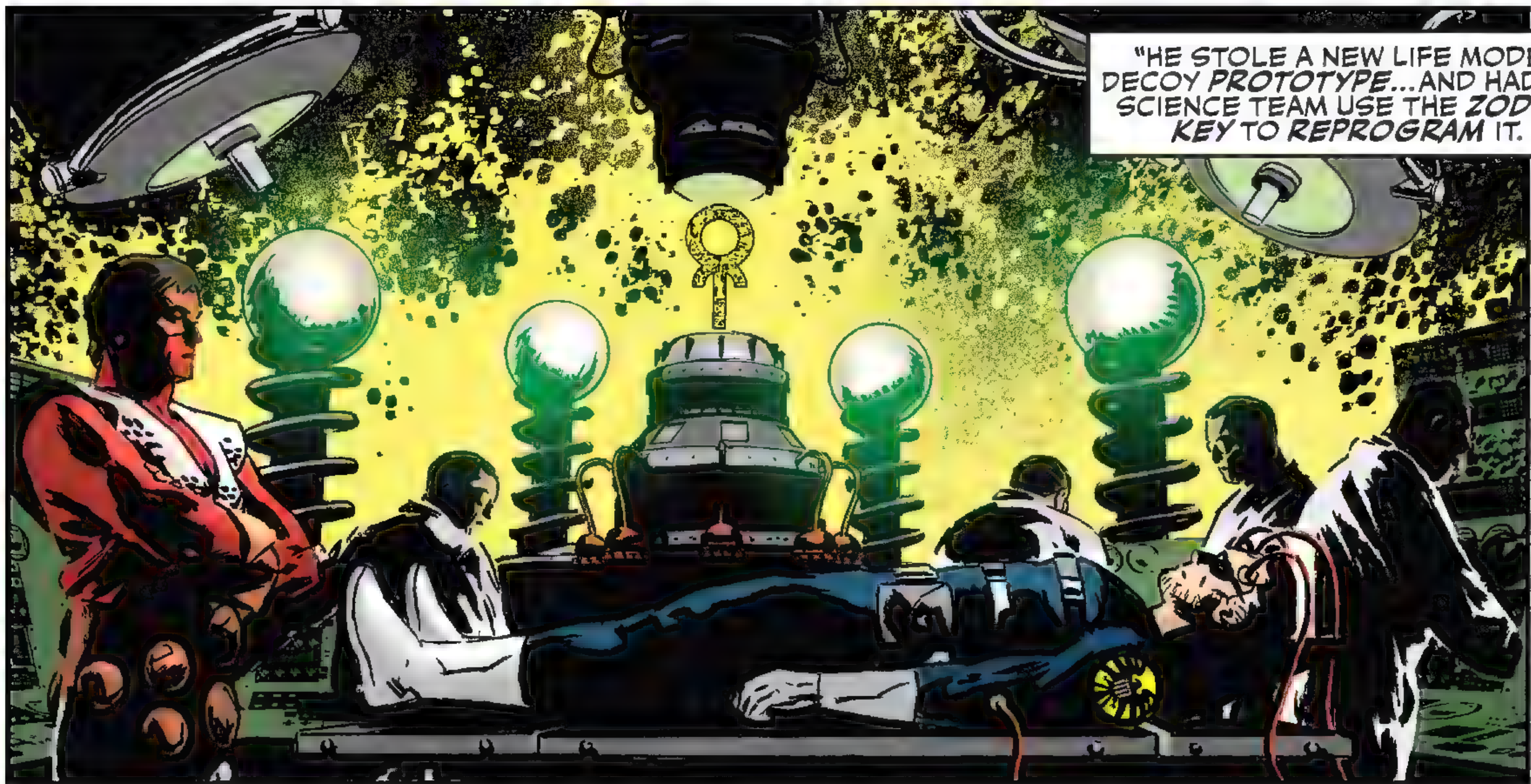
SECRET HISTORIES EPILOGUE
THE SECRET LIFE OF
MAX FURY





IT'S MY NIGHTMARE, ROGERS... THAT'S WHAT IT IS.

"STARTED ABOUT TEN OR TWELVE YEARS BACK...MY BROTHER JAKE WAS GOIN' BY THE NAME SCORPIO... WORKIN' WITH ZODIAC.



"HE STOLE A NEW LIFE MODEL DECOY PROTOTYPE...AND HAD HIS SCIENCE TEAM USE THE ZODIAC KEY TO REPROGRAM IT.

"SO, THIS THING NOT ONLY WALKED AND TALKED JUST LIKE ME...IT HAD ALL MY MEMORIES, TOO...



I DON'T THINK SO, BUDDY...



...I DIDN'T FIGHT THROUGH THREE WARS TO GO OUT THAT EASY.

"IT ACTUALLY THOUGHT IT WAS ME."



WAIT, I REMEMBER...

DIDN'T THAT ONE IMITATE YOU TO FREE A PRISONER FROM THE AVENGERS?

YEAH, RIGHT BEFORE ZODIAC GOT TAKEN DOWN.



I THOUGHT S.H.I.E.L.D. WAS GOING TO DECOMMISSION IT?



YEAH, THAT'S WHERE IT GETS COMPLICATED...



"LIKE I SAID, THIS THING WAS A *PROTOTYPE*...NOT A ROBOT, A *SYNTHETIC MAN*, LIKE THE VISION OR THE ORIGINAL TORCH..."

"BUT IT WASN'T SUPPOSED TO HAVE INDEPENDENT THOUGHT."



"BUT LIKE I SAID, MY BROTHER USED THE ZODIAC KEY, WHICH WE STILL DON'T FULLY UNDERSTAND, TO GIVE HIM MY MEMORIES..."

"AN' NEAR AS WE CAN TELL, IT'S A.I. *BROKE* 'CAUSE OF THAT."



"SO WHEN
ZODIAC
FELL..."



"AND MY
BROTHER OFFED
HIMSELF..."



"THIS THING WAS SUDDENLY
FACED WITH THE FACT THAT IT
WASN'T *REALLY* NICK FURY,
AGENT OF *S.H.I.E.L.D.*, AND..."



"...WELL, IT *LOST* ITS
ARTIFICIAL MIND."

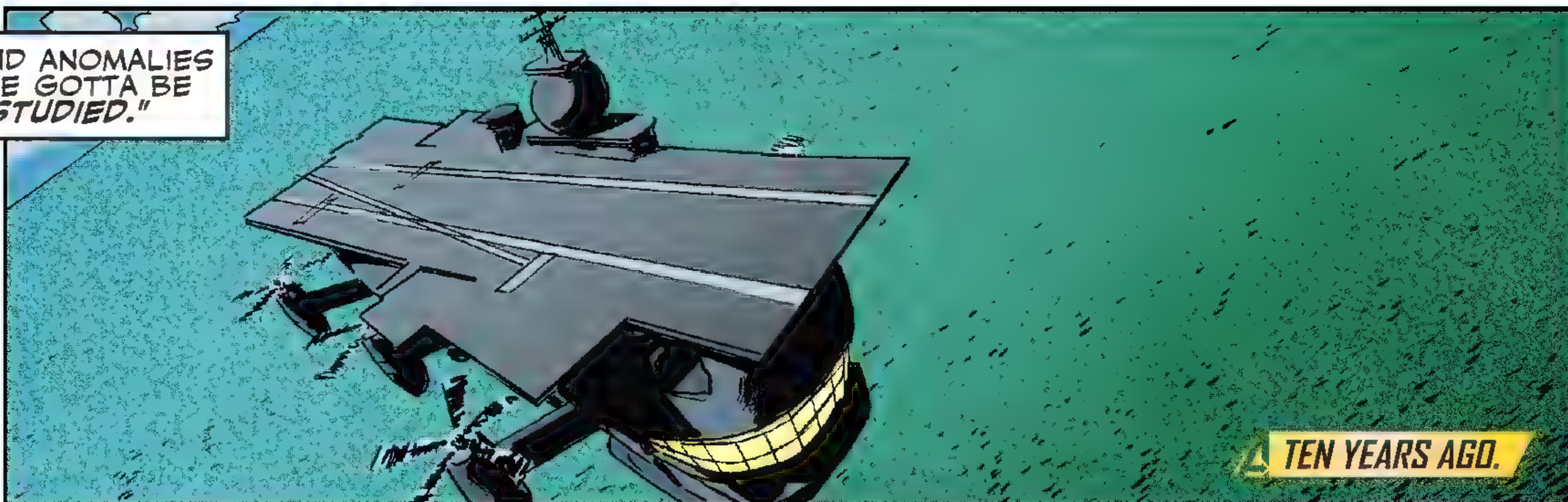


AND LET ME
GUESS...THE *S.H.I.E.L.D.*
SCIENCE GUYS HAD
NEVER SEEN ANYTHING
LIKE IT?

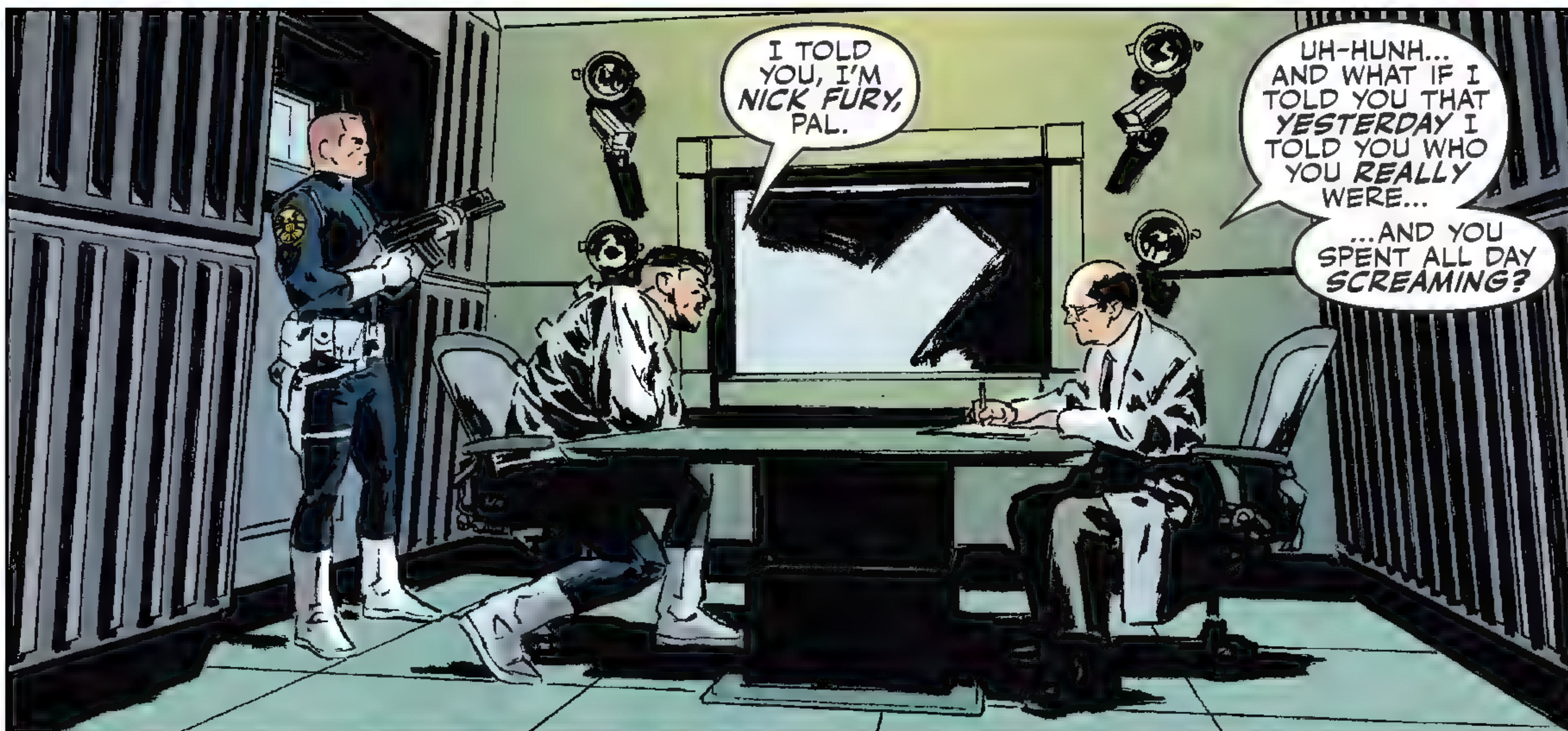
YEP.
THIS WAS AN
ANOMALY...

AN LMD
THAT STARTED
THINKING FOR
ITSELF...

"...AND ANOMALIES
HAVE GOTTA BE
STUDIED."



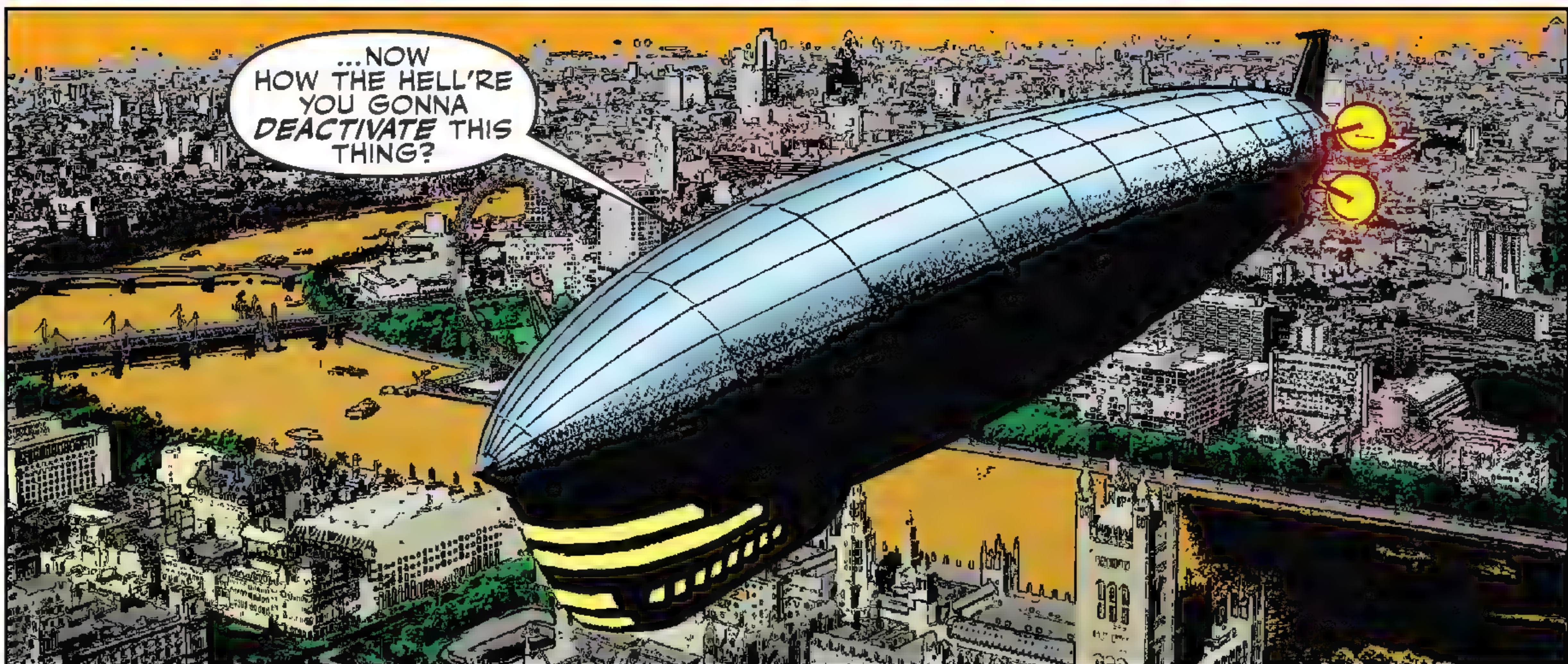
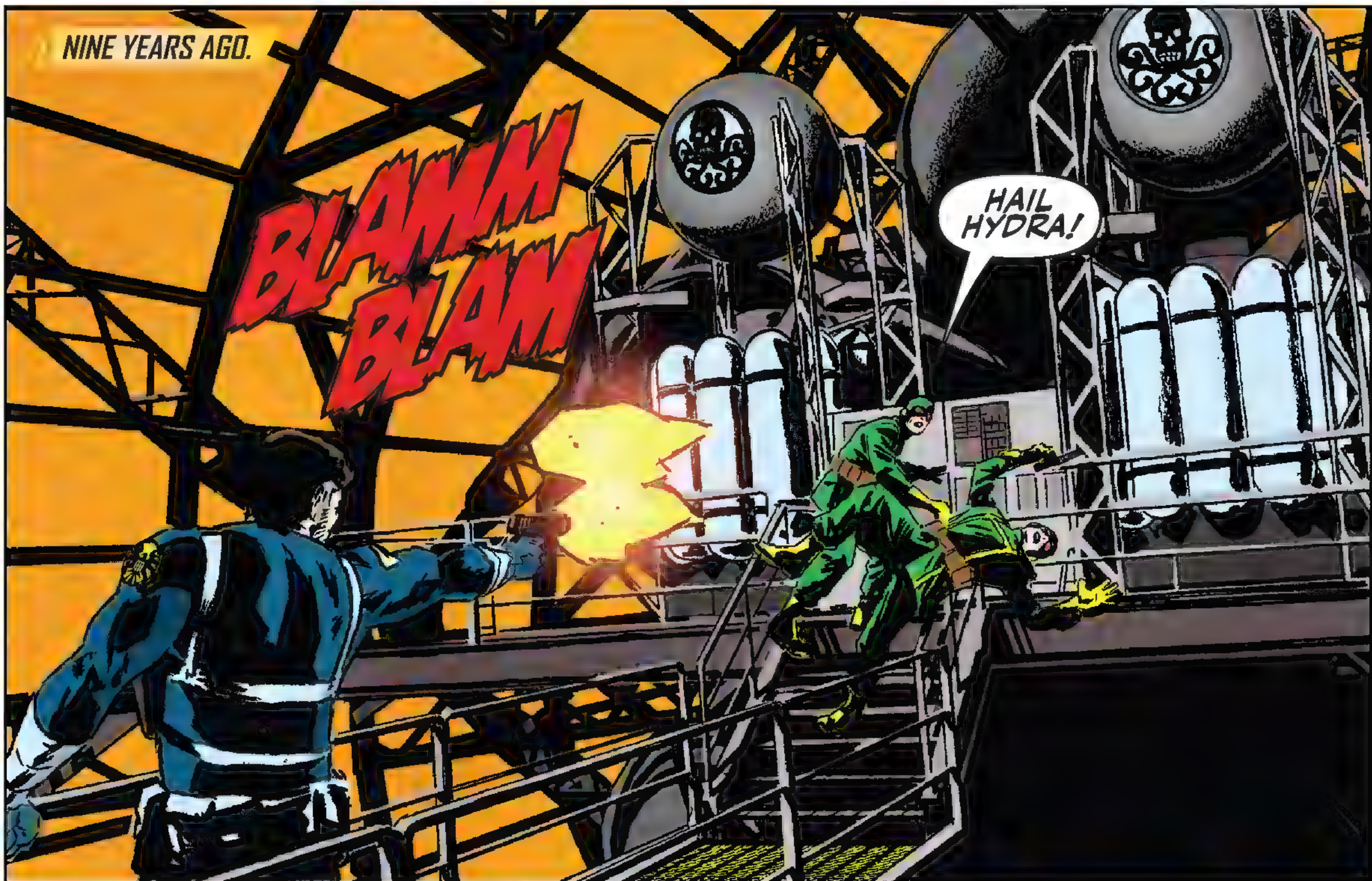
TEN YEARS AGO.



"SEE, HE'D KEEP FORGETTIN'
HE WASN'T REAL...LIKE HIS
MEMORY KEPT REBOOTING
OR SOMETHIN'..."



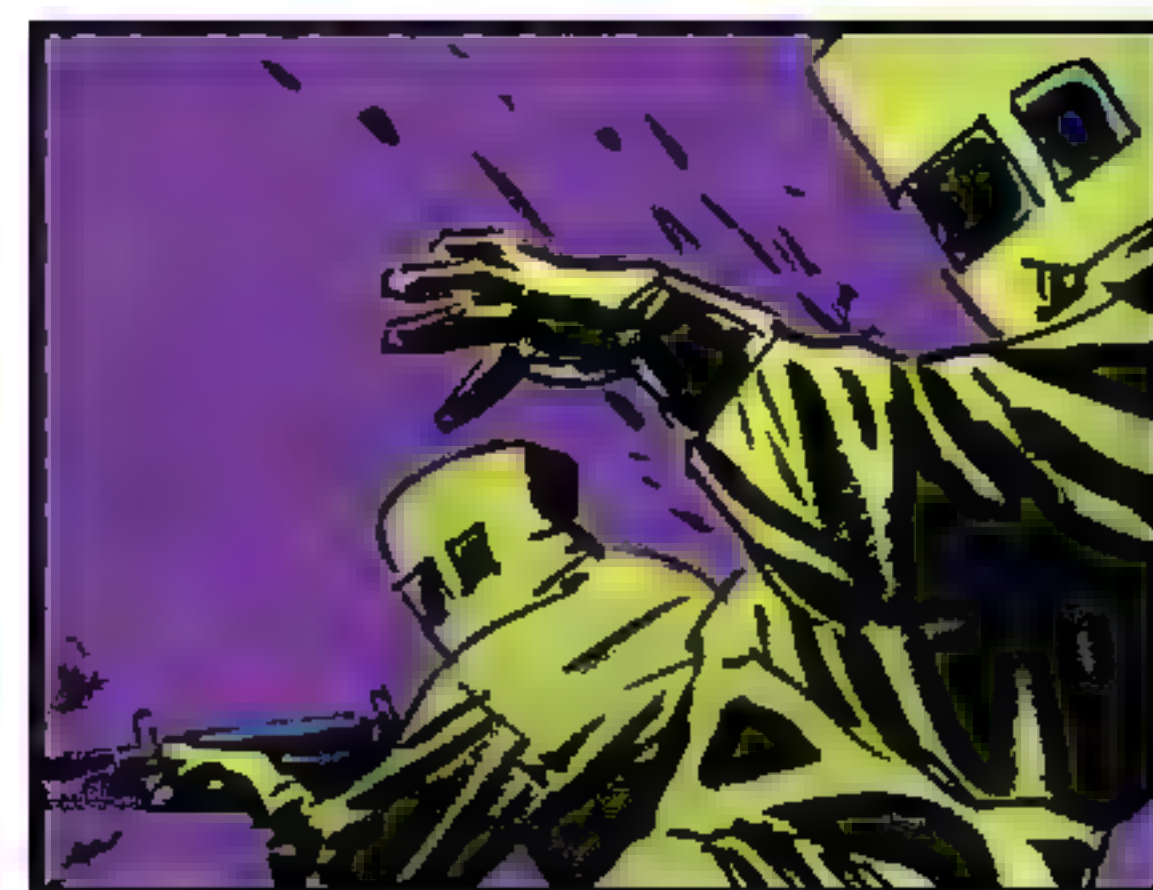
NINE YEARS AGO.





EIGHT YEARS AGO.

"IT WAS ALMOST FUNNY.
S.H.I.E.L.D. WAS ON
THIS GUY'S TRAIL..."



"...AN' THE BREAD-
CRUMBS HE WAS LEAVIN'
US WERE BUSTED-UP
TERROR PLOTS.

"STOPPIN' HYDRA FROM
BLOWIN' UP A CITY..."

"STOPPIN' A.I.M.
FROM TURNIN'
THE ATLANTIC
OCEAN INTO
FIRE..."









I GUESS
I KNOW THAT...
SINCE I'D DO
THE SAME
THING.

IT SHOULD'A
BEEN DONE
WHEN WE FIRST
FOUND YOU.

THEY
SHOULDN'T
HAVE STUDIED
YOU...LIKE SOME
LAB RAT.



'CAUSE
A LAB RAT IS
ALIVE?



YOU AIN'T
ALIVE...YOU'RE A
ROBOT, WHEN IT
COMES DOWN
TO IT.



EXCEPT I'M NOT
PROGRAMMED.
I HAVE
CONSCIOUSNESS
AND MEMORY...ISN'T
THAT LIFE?



I DON'T
KNOW...I'M NOT
A SCIENTIST OR A
PHILOSOPHER...

I'M A
SOLDIER, AND
YOU'RE A FRIGGIN'
DANGEROUS
WEAPON.



I'M
SORRY...

YEAH...
ME, TOO...



"AND THAT WAS IT...HE WAS DEACTIVATED WHEN WE GOT BACK TO THE HELICARRIER..."



...AND INCINERATED A FEW DAYS LATER.

OR SO YOU THOUGHT?

YEAH, OR SO I THOUGHT.



"I WATCHED THAT CREMATION PERSONALLY...BUT CLEARLY, SOMETHIN' HAPPENED."



BECAUSE THIS IS HIM. IT'S GOTTA BE.

AND THIS UNIFORM HE'S WEARING?

NEVER SEEN IT BEFORE...

GREAT...



WHAT?

YOU'RE PISSED AT ME?



I DIDN'T
MAKE THAT
THING.

NO, BUT YOU
MADE HIM WHAT
HE IS **NOW**... WHEN
YOU ORDERED
HIS **DEATH**.

IT WAS A
FRIGGIN' **LMD**,
STEVE.



YOU'RE
TALKING TO A MAN
WHO'S HAD **TWO**
FRIENDS THAT WERE
SYNTHETIC LIFE-
FORMS, FURY.



YEAH, AN'
NEITHER OF 'EM HAD
MY MEMORIES. DON'T
YOU **GET IT**?



HE KNEW
WHAT **I** KNEW...
WHICH MEANS HE
KNEW **TOO**
MUCH.

HE WAS **TOO**
DANGEROUS.

YEAH...
AND OBVIOUSLY
SOMEONE **ELSE**
THOUGHT SO,
TOO...



HAVE
YOUR **SOURCES**
LOOK INTO THAT
UNIFORM,
NICK.

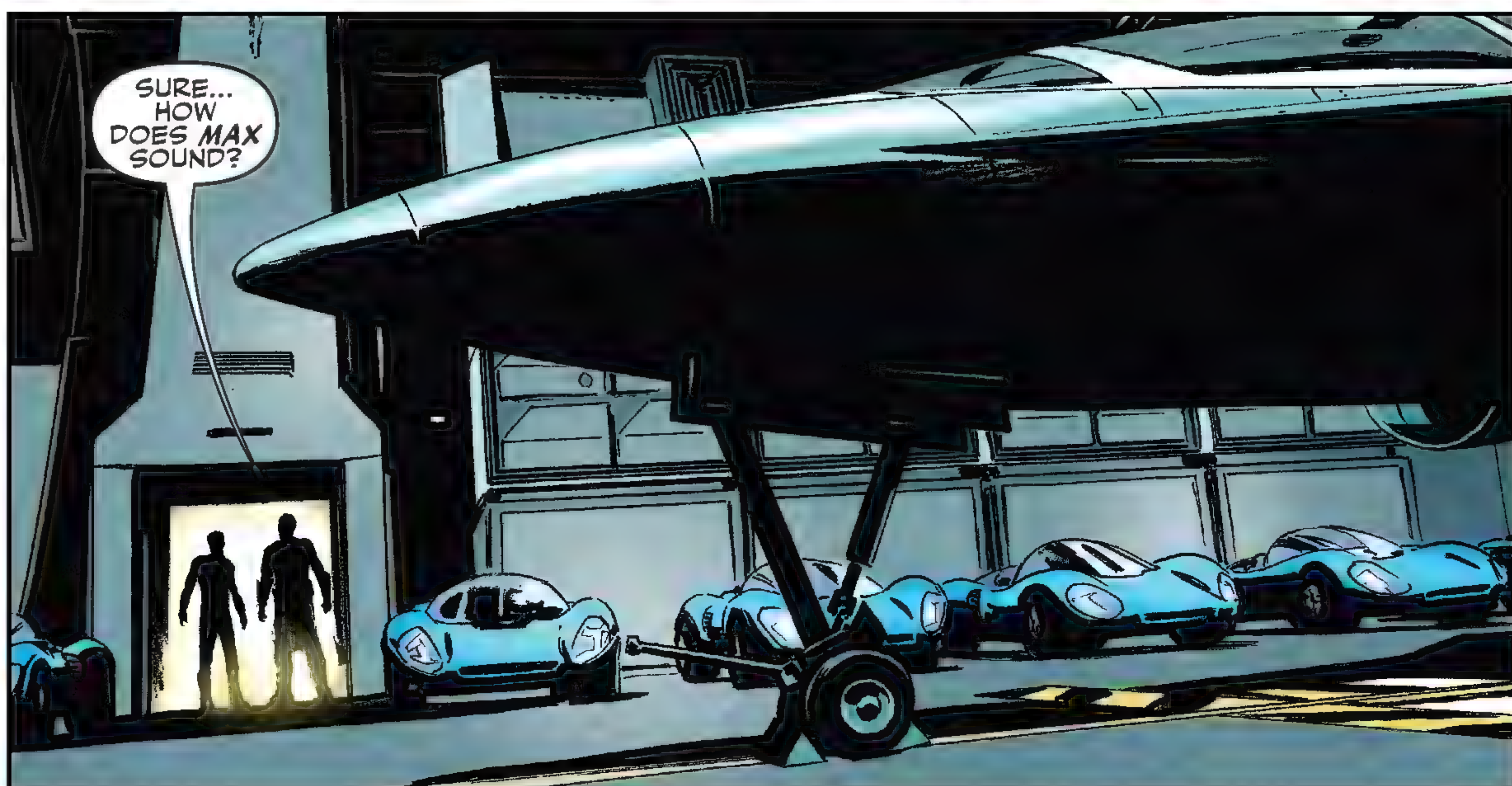
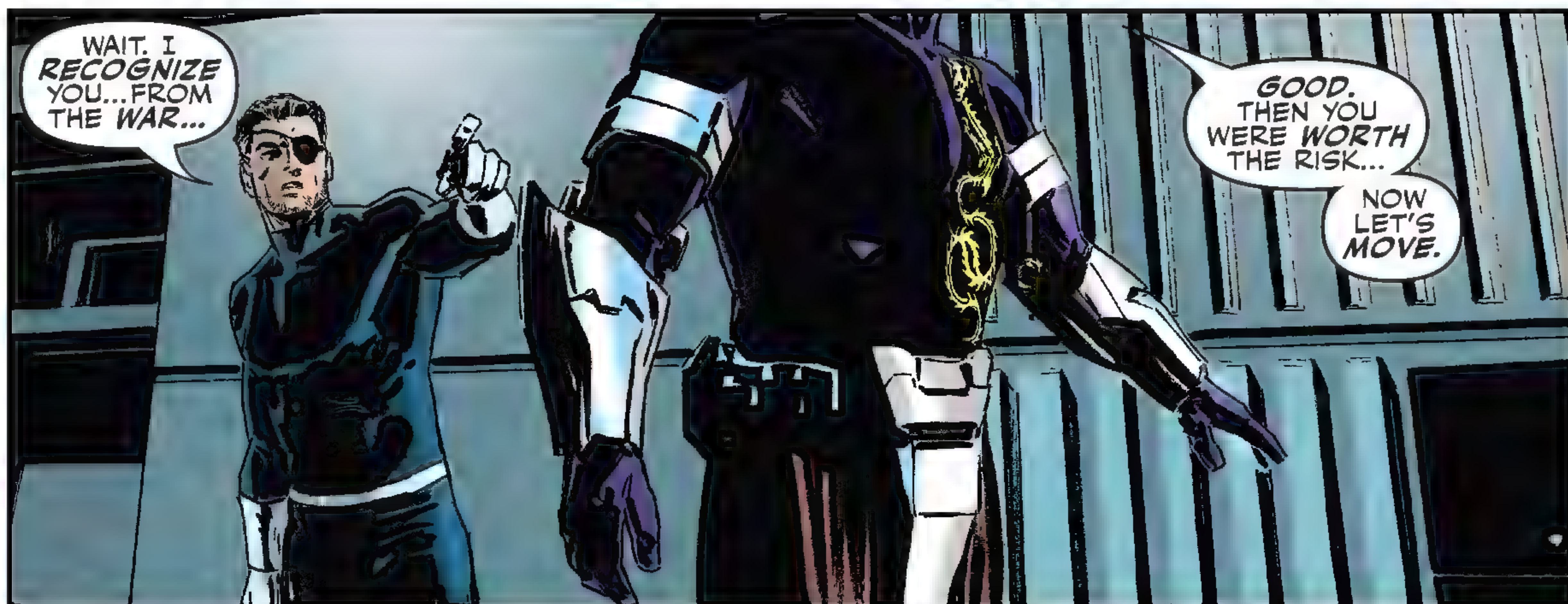
WE'LL
BE IN
TOUCH...

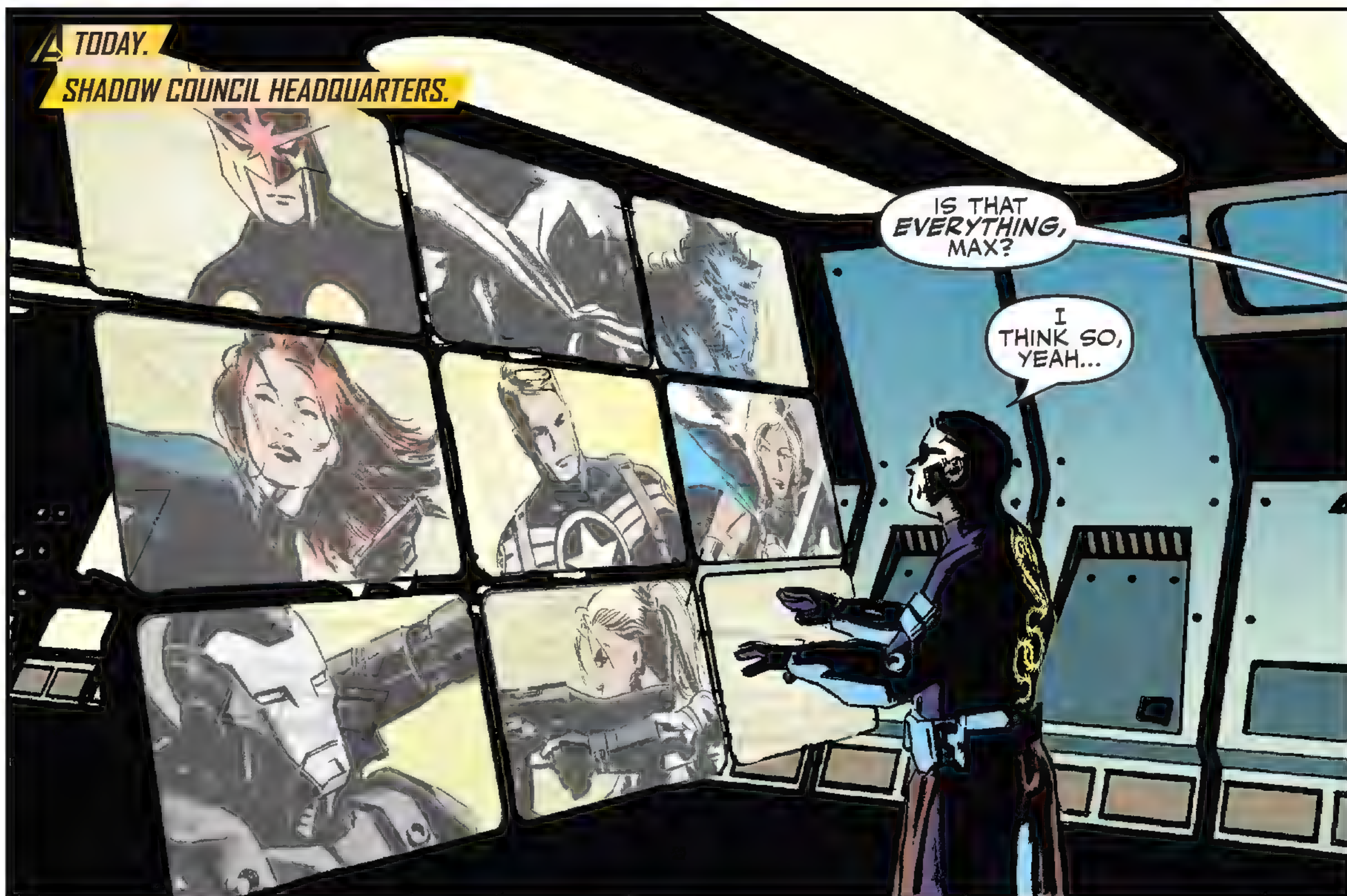


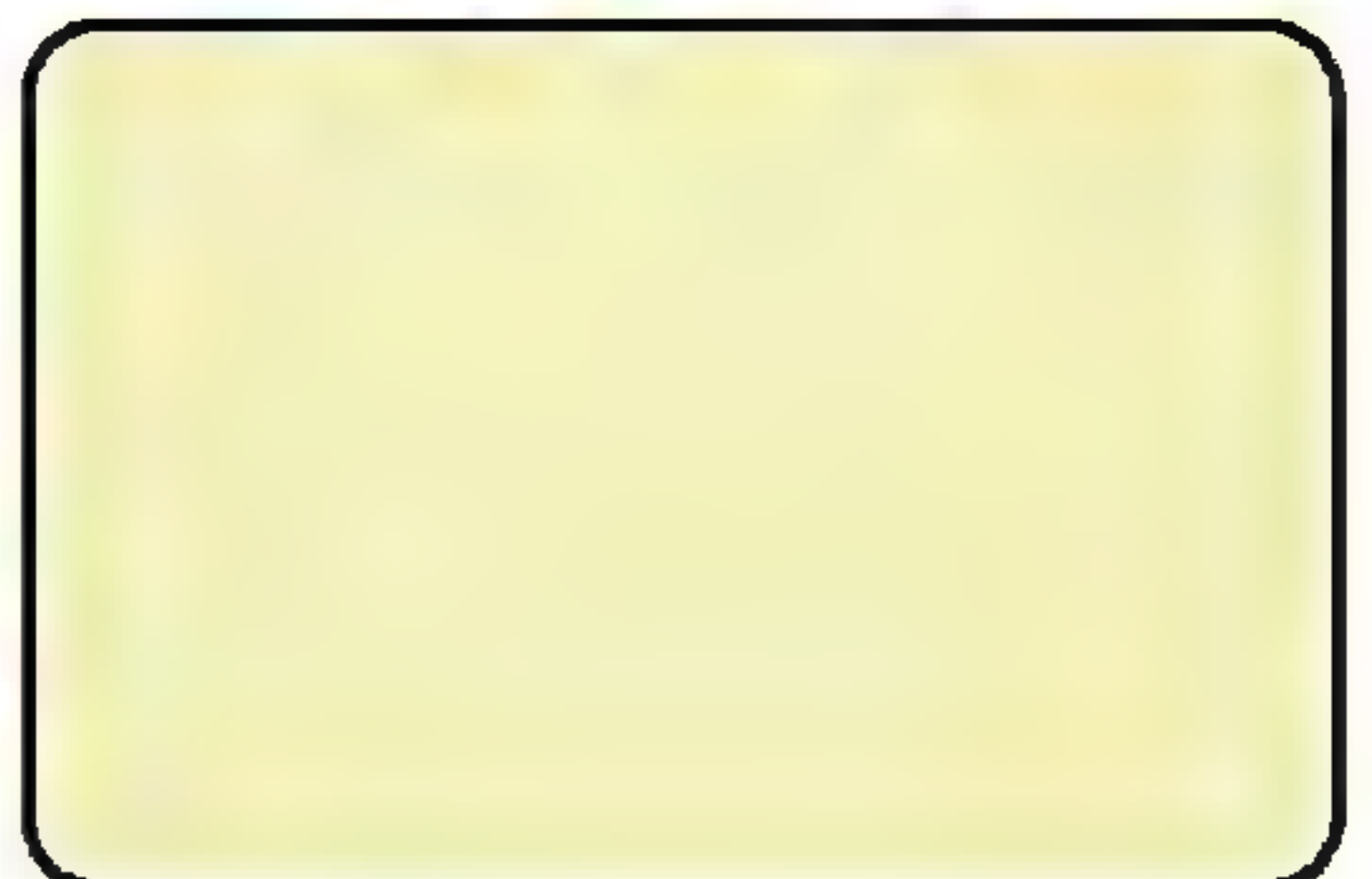
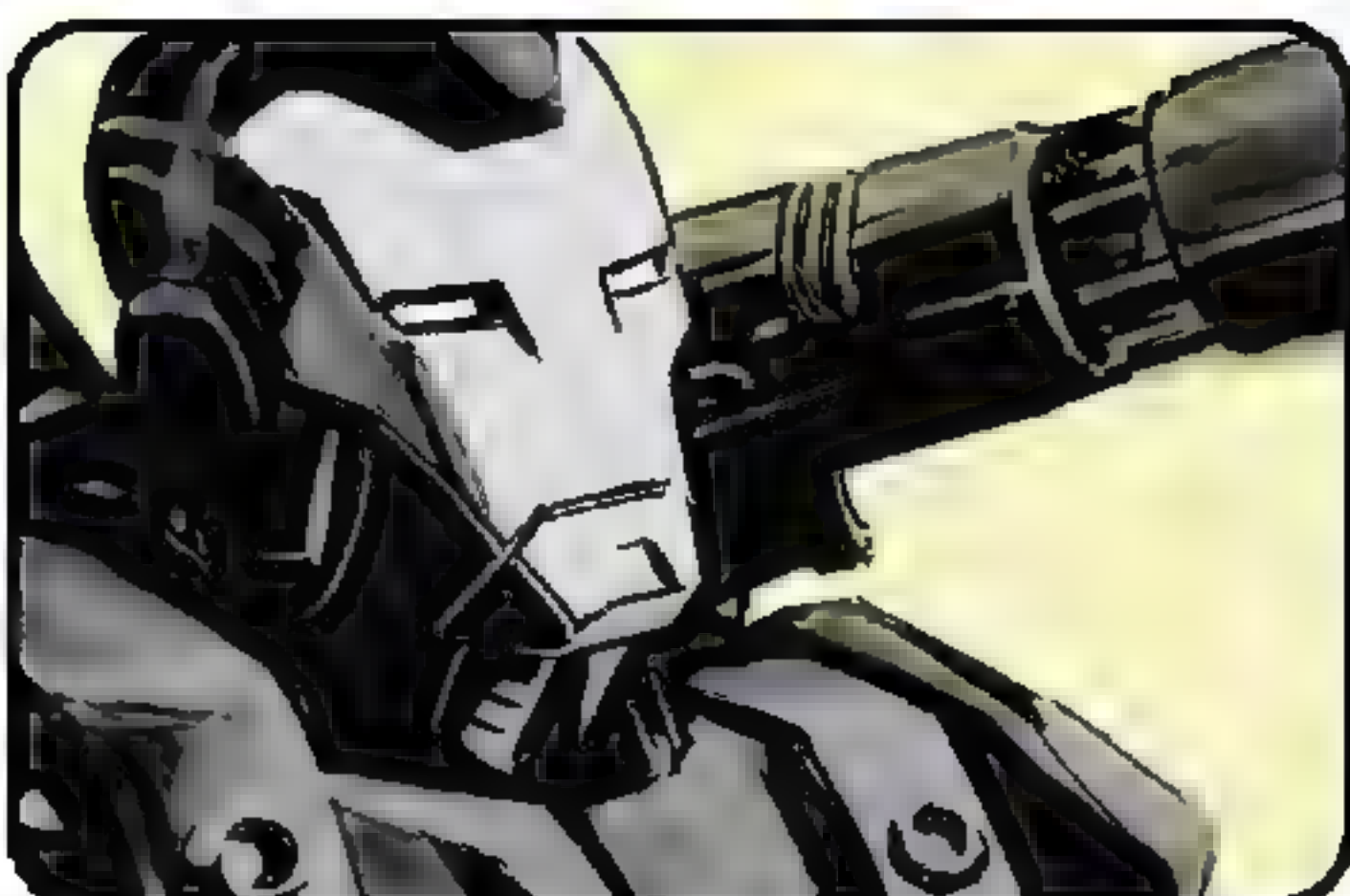
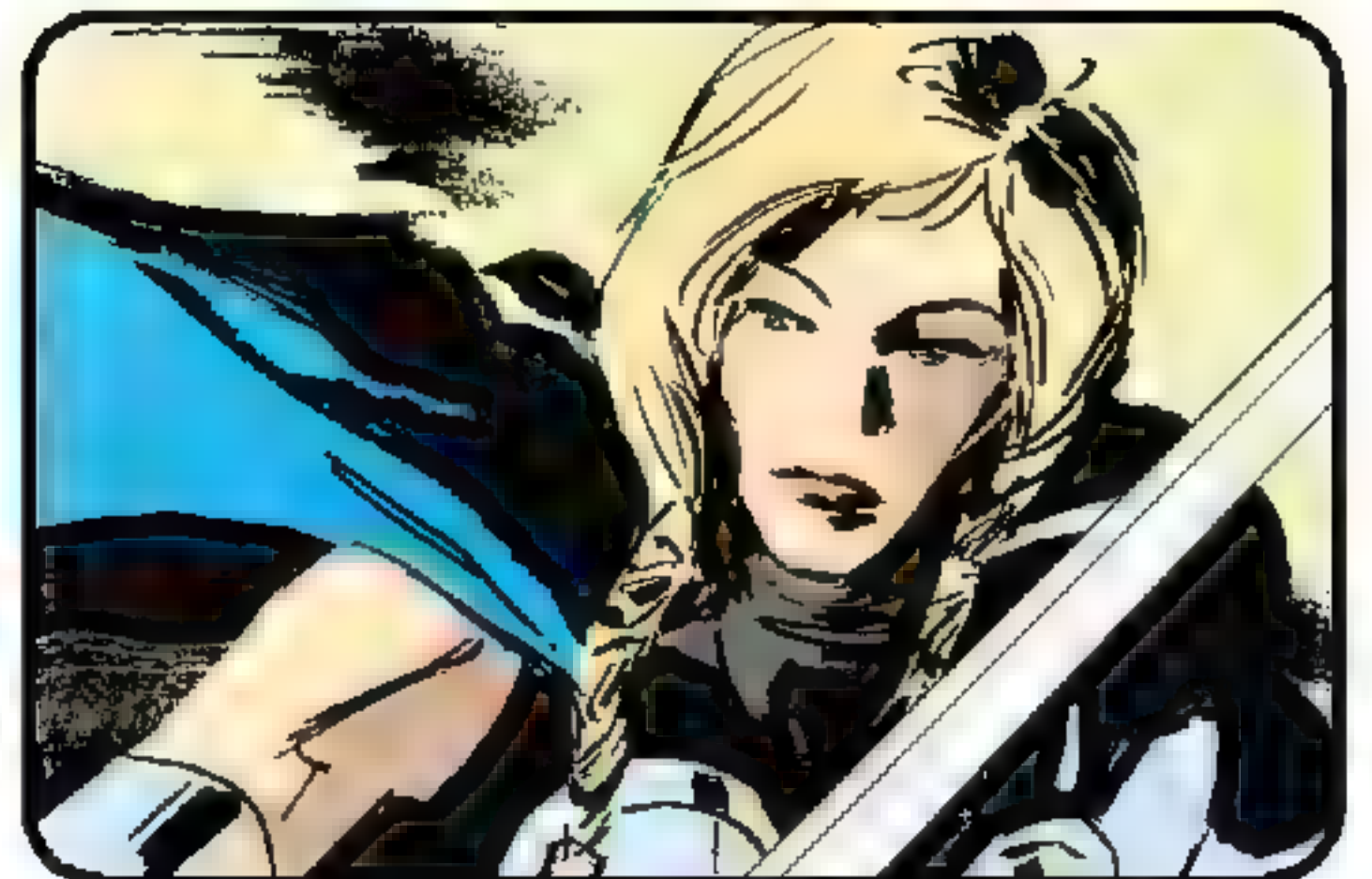
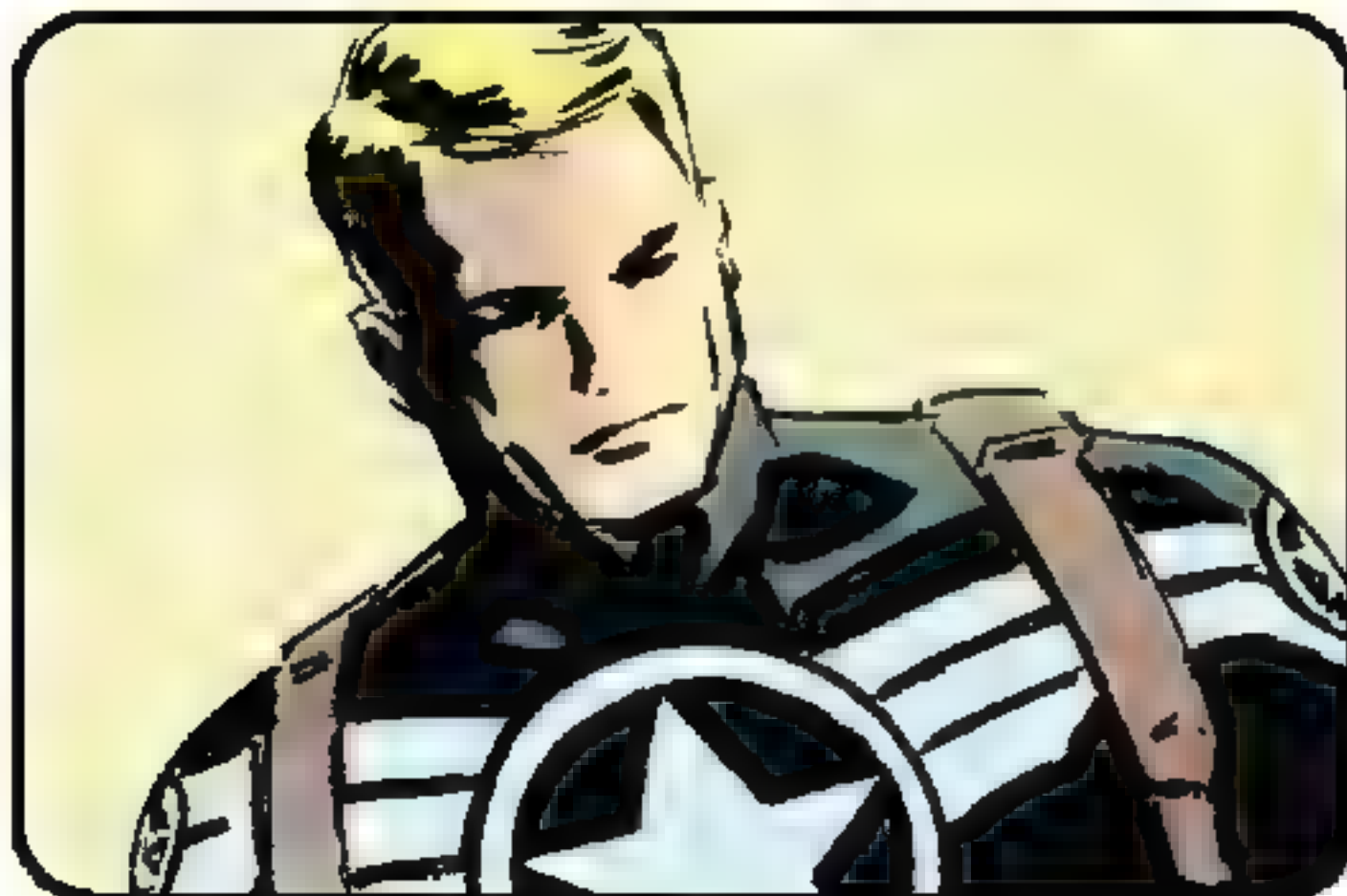
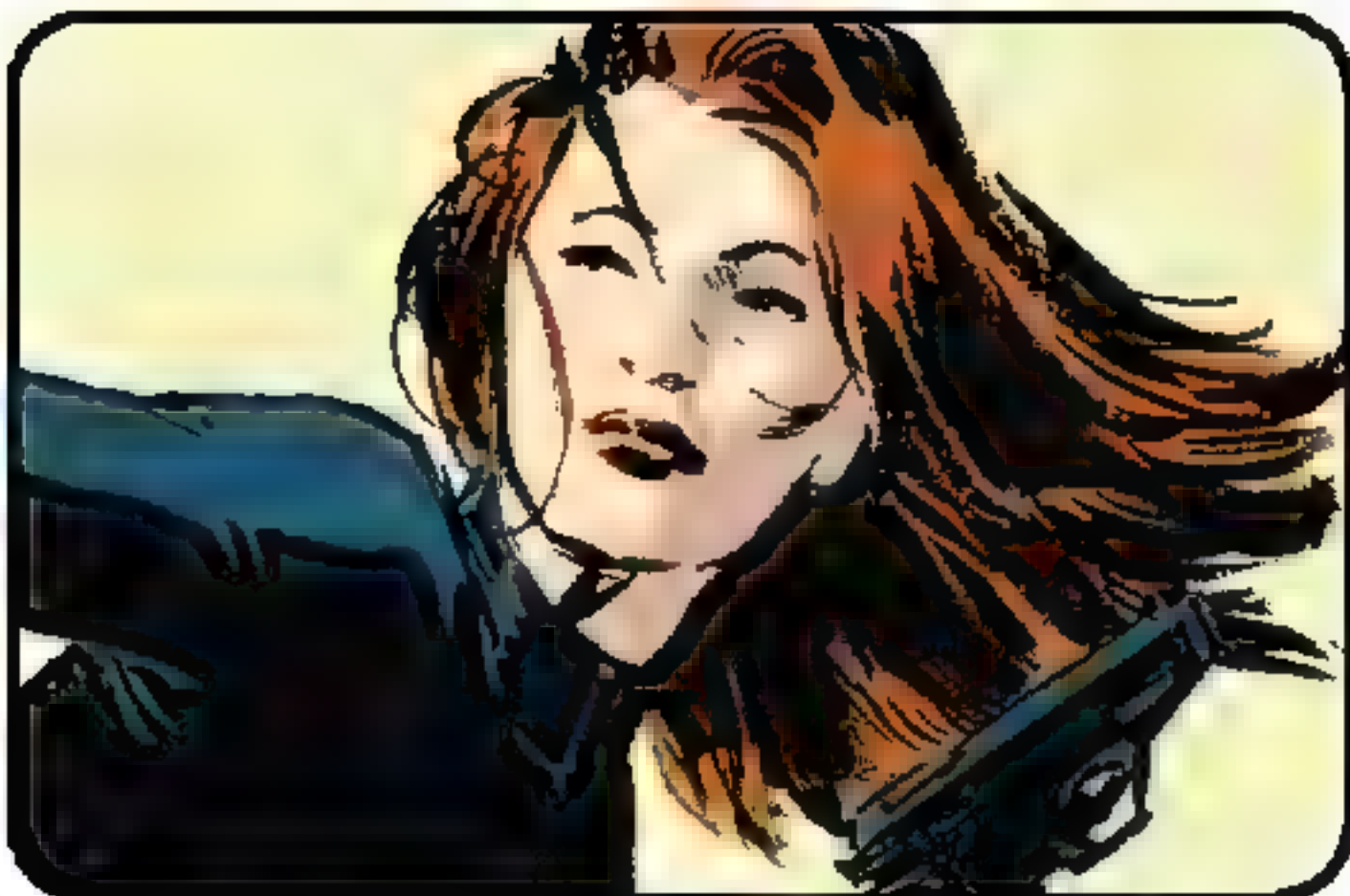
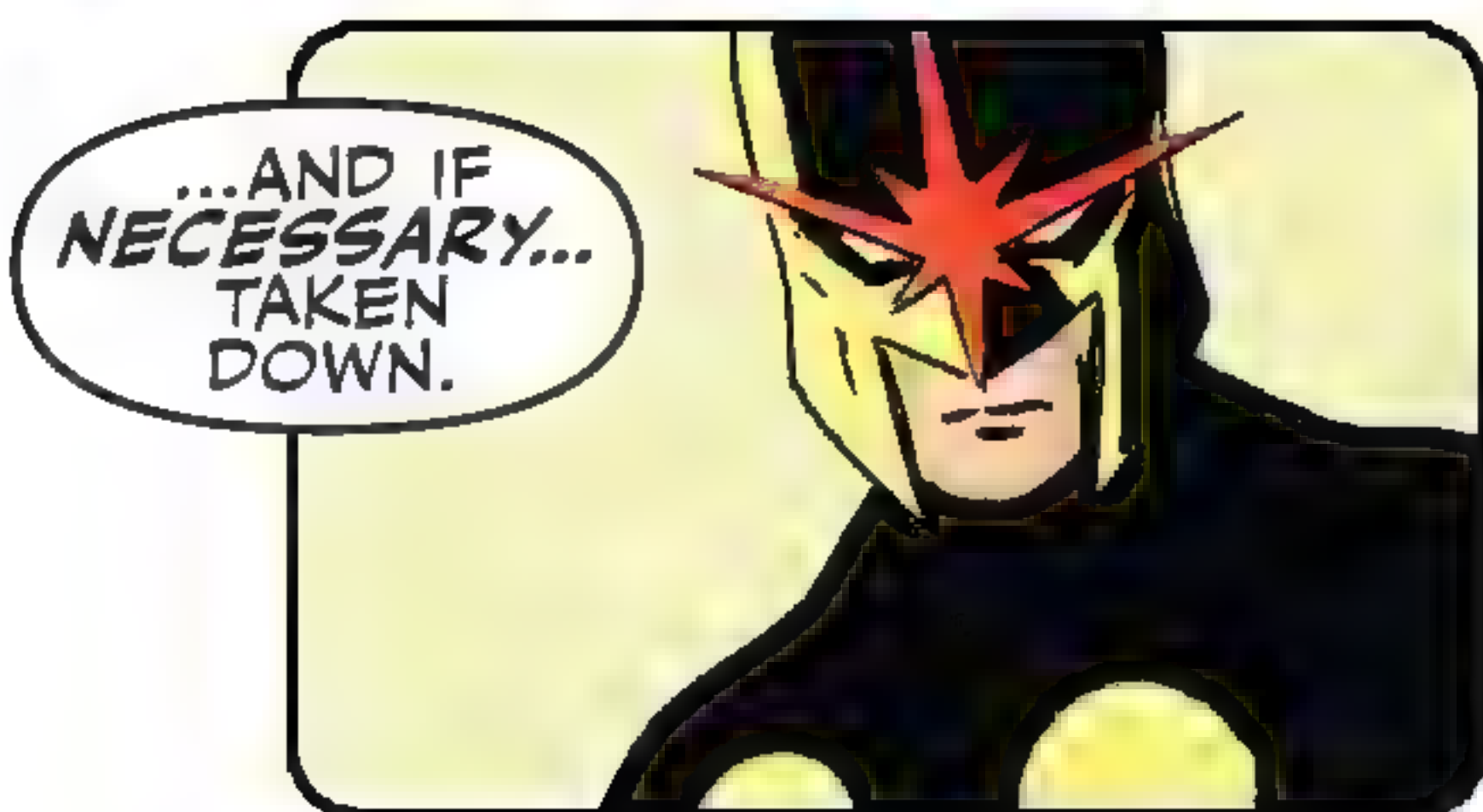
...CRAP...







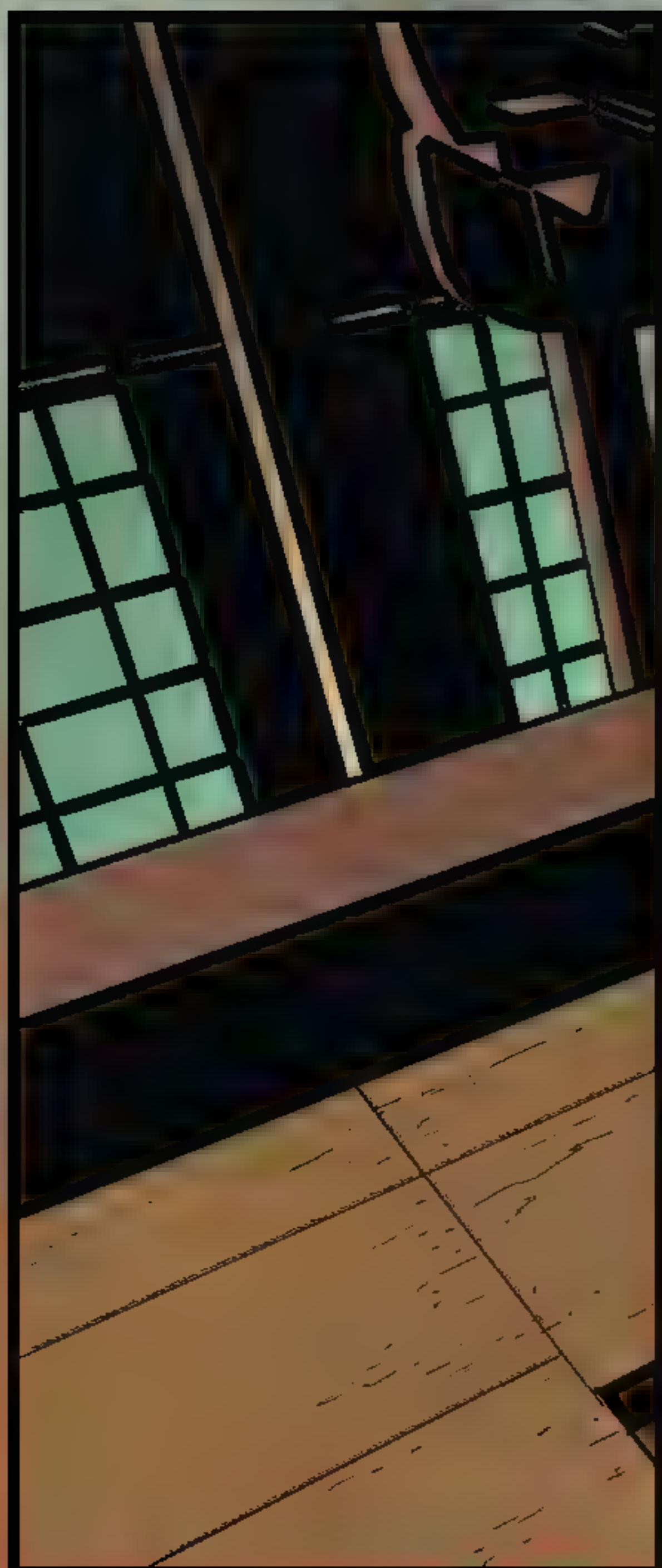




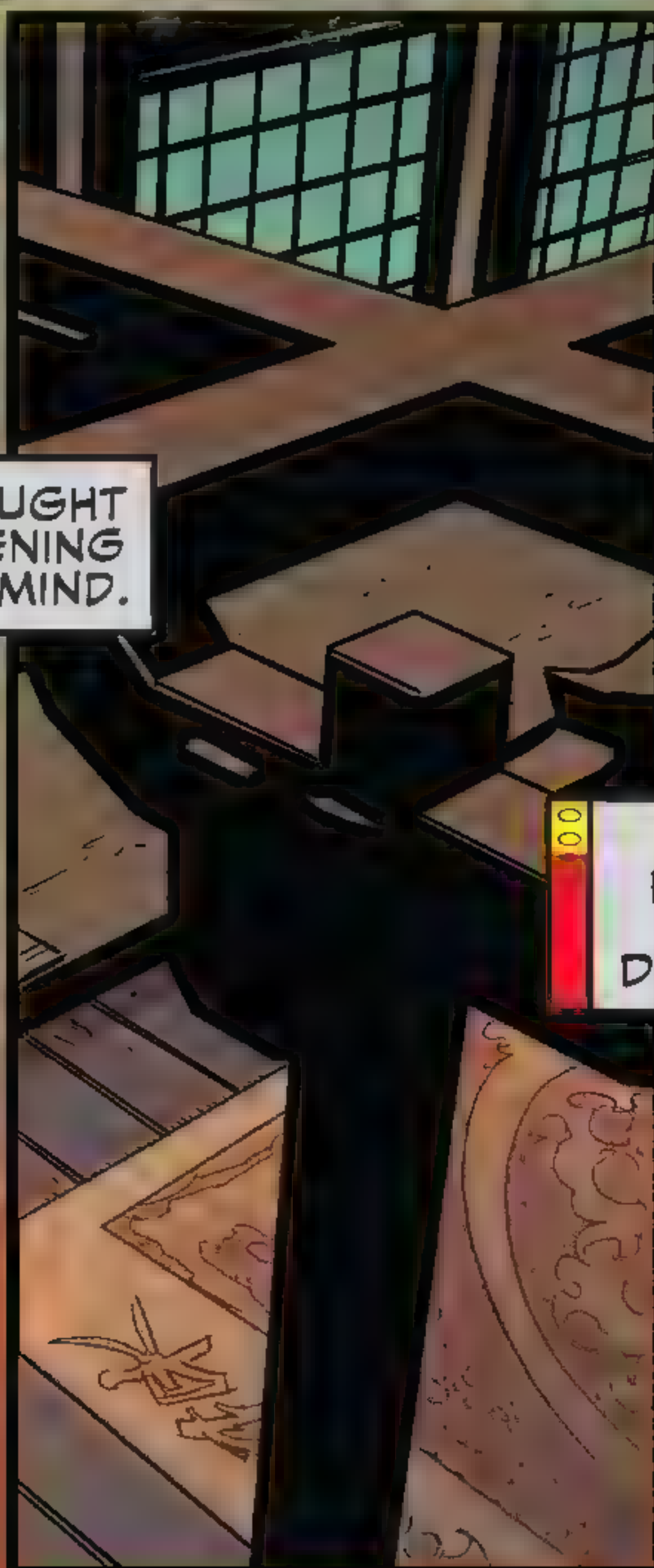




00
IT COMES TO ME
IN THE MIDDLE
OF THE NIGHT.



00
A THOUGHT
AWAKENING
IN MY MIND.



00
LIKE A
FAMILIAR
SCENT
DRIFTING...



00
...ACROSS
TROUBLED
WATERS.



00
A MEMORY.

00
AND ALL
AT ONCE,
I SIMPLY
KNOW...



EYES of the DRAGON

SHANG-CHI
MASTER OF KUNG FU

...MY FATHER
HAS RETURNED.

K-YAAAAH!!!



00

THE CELESTIAL
ORDER OF THE
HAI-DAI.

00

THEY
SHOULD
NOT BE
HERE...

KRANK

KRAAK

GUUHH--

00

ONE OF THE MANY
GROUPS WHO ONCE
DISBANDED...

00

...AS THEY
LIVED ONLY TO
SERVE HIM...

NGAAA--!



00 BUT THEN...

<...I AM NOT!>

KRAAK

GYAA--

00 ...IN MY DAYS...

00 ...I HAVE SEEN MANY IMPOSSIBLE THINGS.

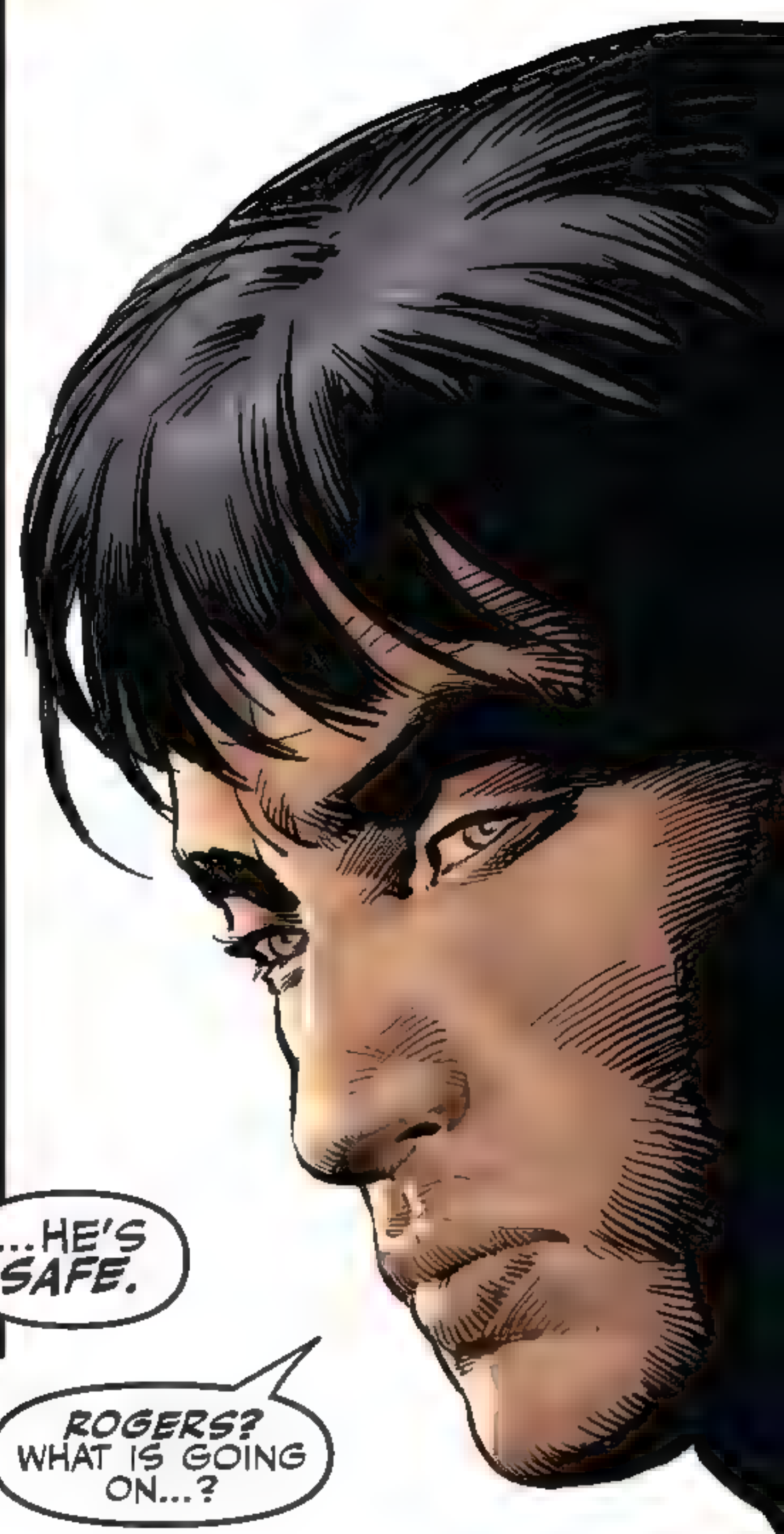
YAAAMMBEEE

WACHH

KRRK

PRINCE OF ORPHANS
also known as THE GREEN MIST OF DEATH

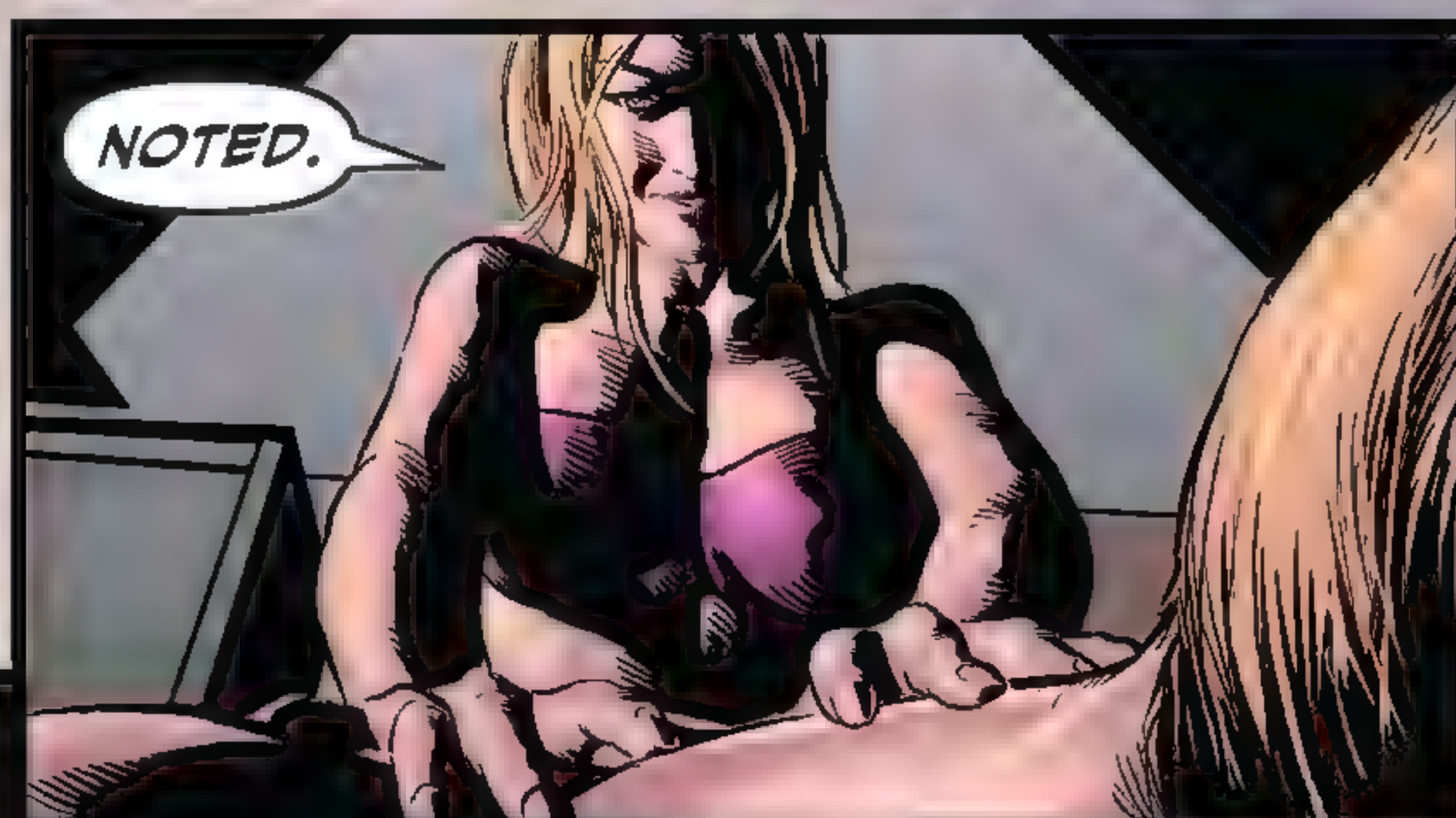
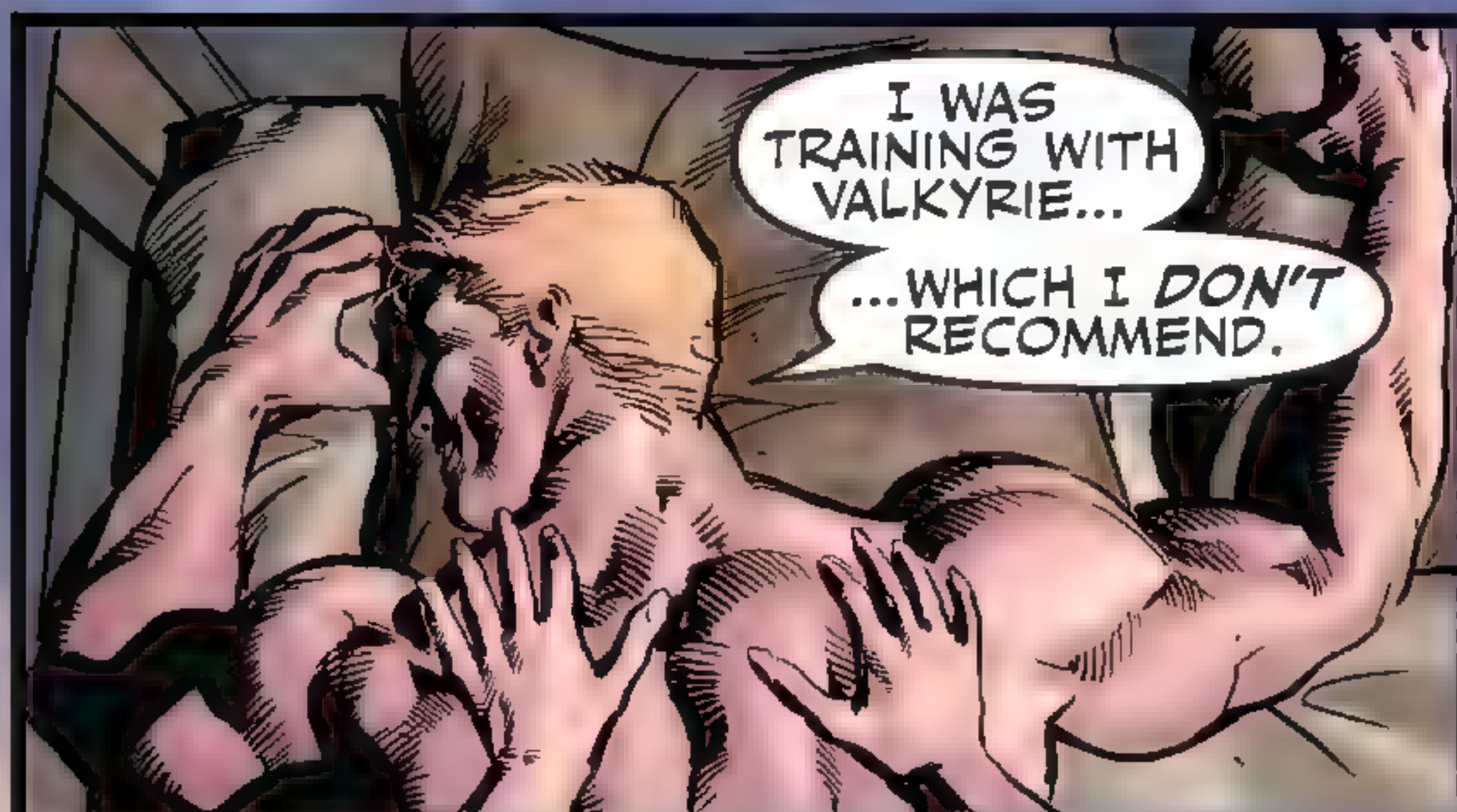
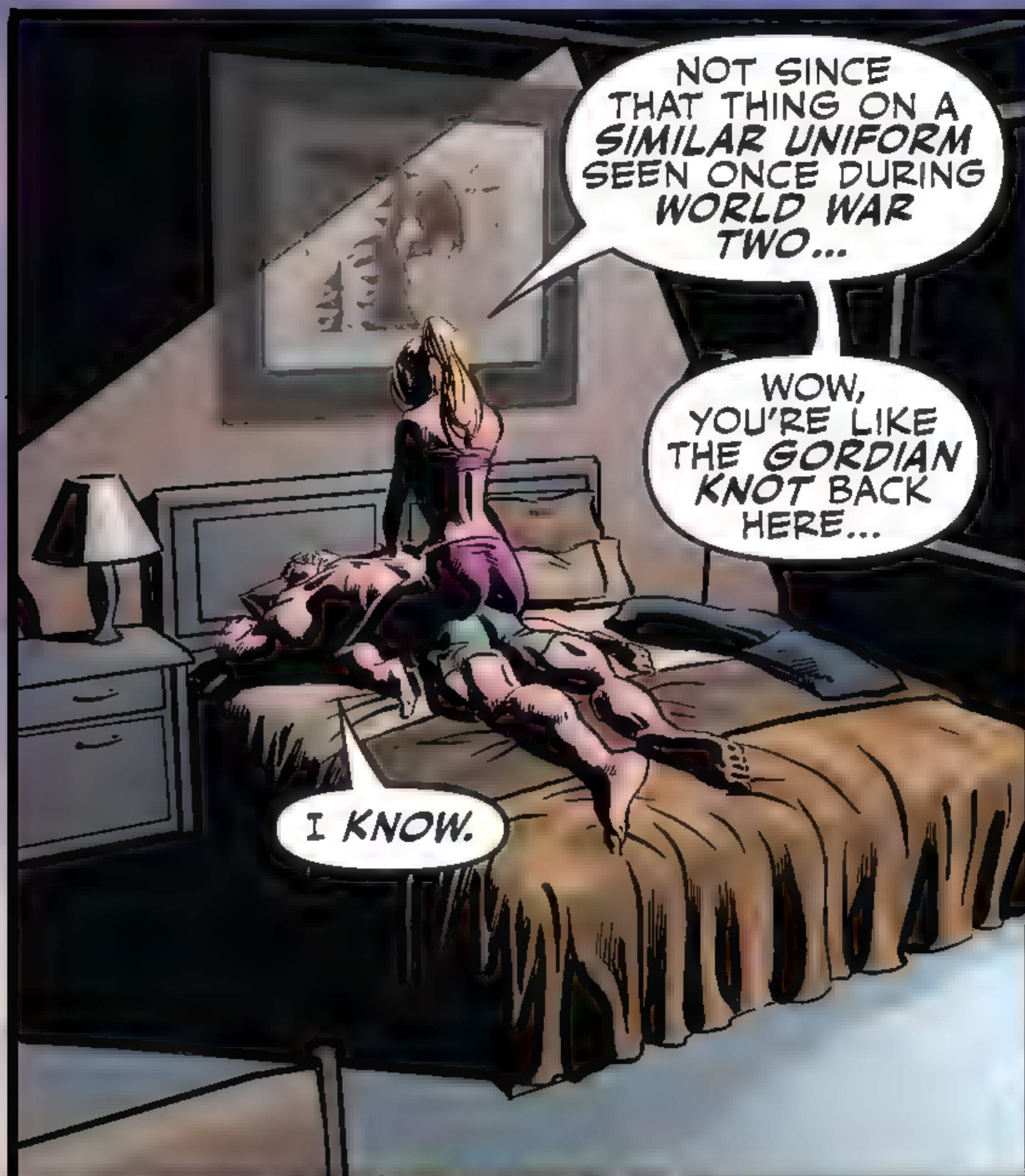
BEHIND YOU, BOY...



SECRET AVENGERS
FLOATING HQ

TWO DAYS AGO

--AND
NO MORE
INTEL FROM
NICK?



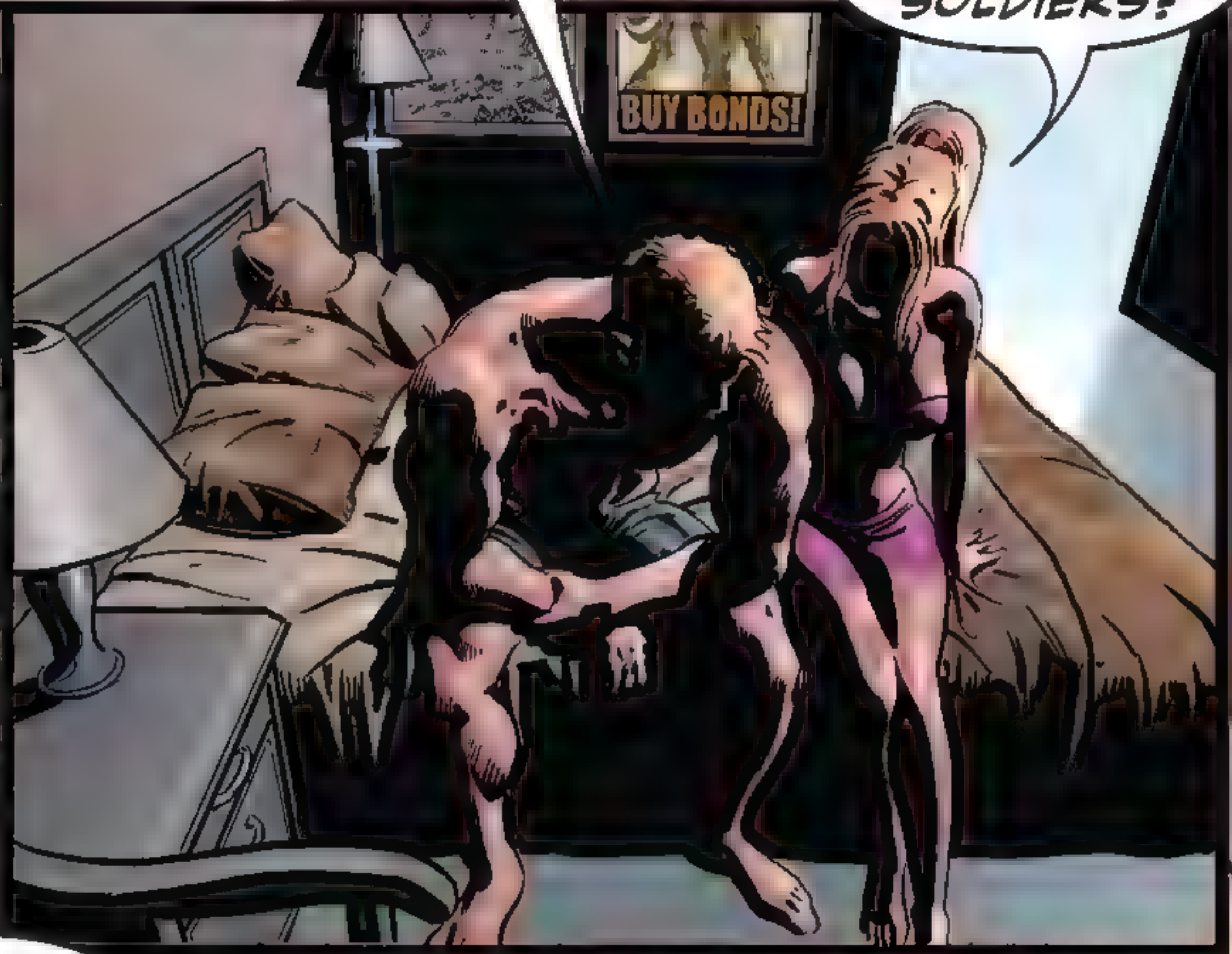
NO, I DON'T THINK HE'D APPRECIATE THAT...

HE PREFERS TO STAY OFF THE GRID.



I COULD BARELY GET HIM TO ACCEPT THE MICRO-COMMUNICATOR.

BUT YOU TRUST HIM TO FIND OUT ABOUT OUR MYSTERY SOLDIERS?



NICK'S INTEL SAID THEY WERE SEEN DURING A MISSION IN CHINA IN 1942...

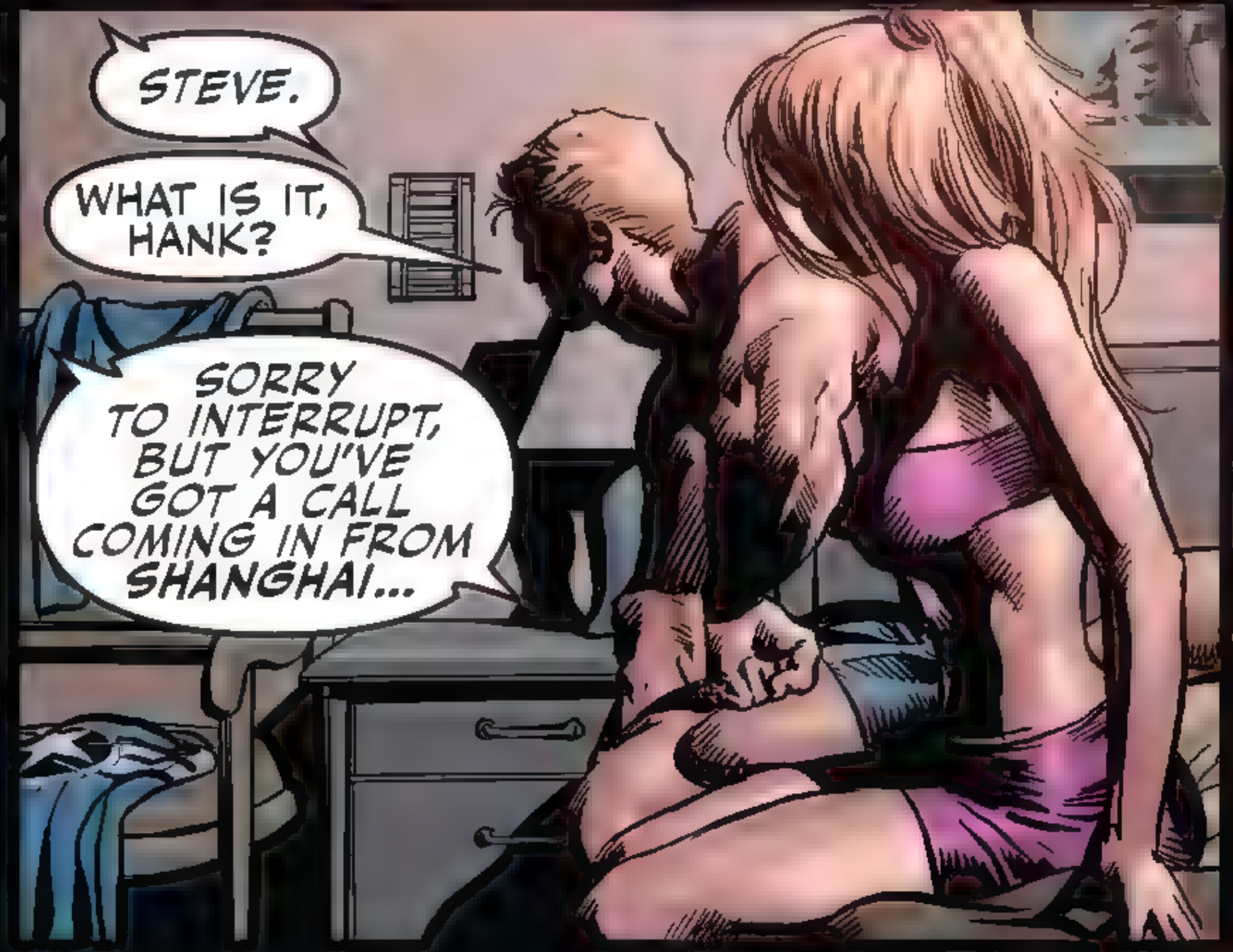
NO ONE KNEW THAT AREA BETTER THAN HIM...



STEVE.

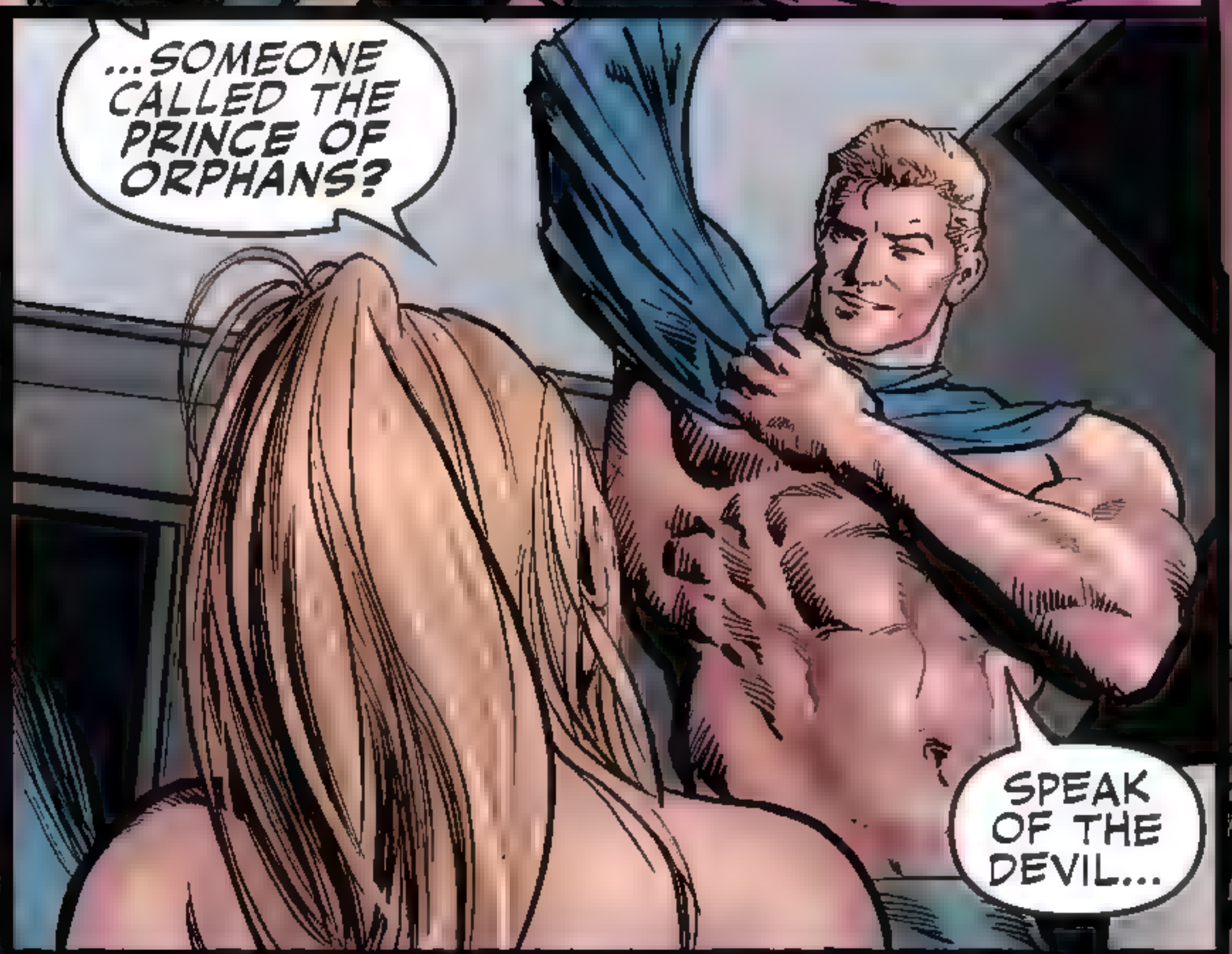
WHAT IS IT, HANK?

SORRY TO INTERRUPT, BUT YOU'VE GOT A CALL COMING IN FROM SHANGHAI...



...SOMEONE CALLED THE PRINCE OF ORPHANS?

SPEAK OF THE DEVIL...



I DON'T
HAVE ANY NEWS
ON THE *MISSION*,
ROGERS...

...BUT I
DID COME ACROSS
SOMETHING I THOUGHT
YOU'D WANT TO KNOW
ABOUT.

I GOT
HERE TOO
LATE TO *SAVE*
ANYONE...

...BUT THIS
IS THE *THIRD* ATTACK
ON AN *UNDERGROUND*
TEMPLE IN SHANGHAI
THIS MONTH.

I'D
BEEN HEARING
WHISPERS ABOUT
THEM ALL
WEEK IN THE
SHADOWS.



NO ONE KNEW FOR SURE WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE...

...BUT EVERY RUMOR SAID THE HAI-DAI HAD RETURNED.

HAI-DAI? DIDN'T THEY DISAPPEAR YEARS AGO?

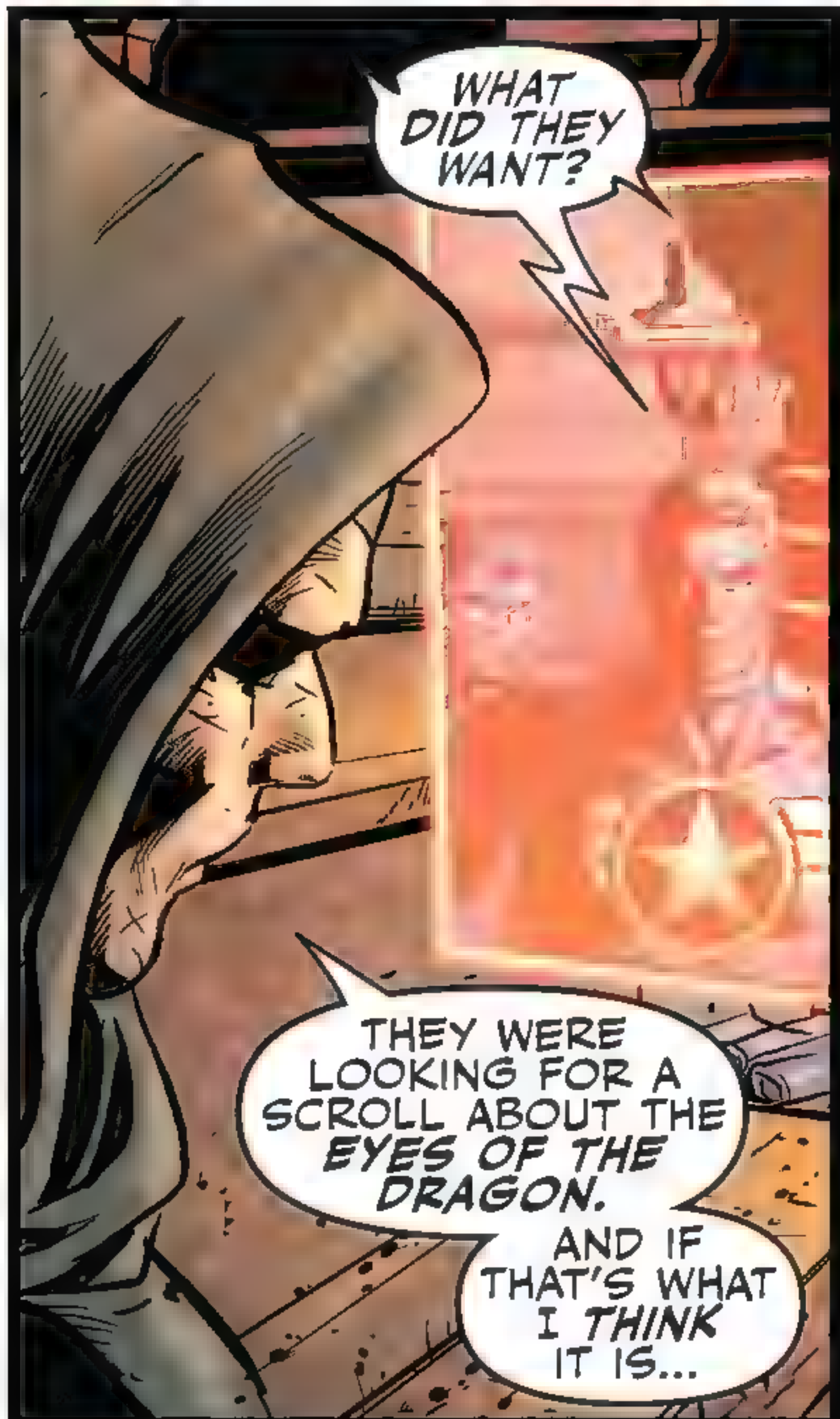


YES, WHICH MAKES THIS OLD MAN'S DYING WORDS EVEN MORE TROUBLING...



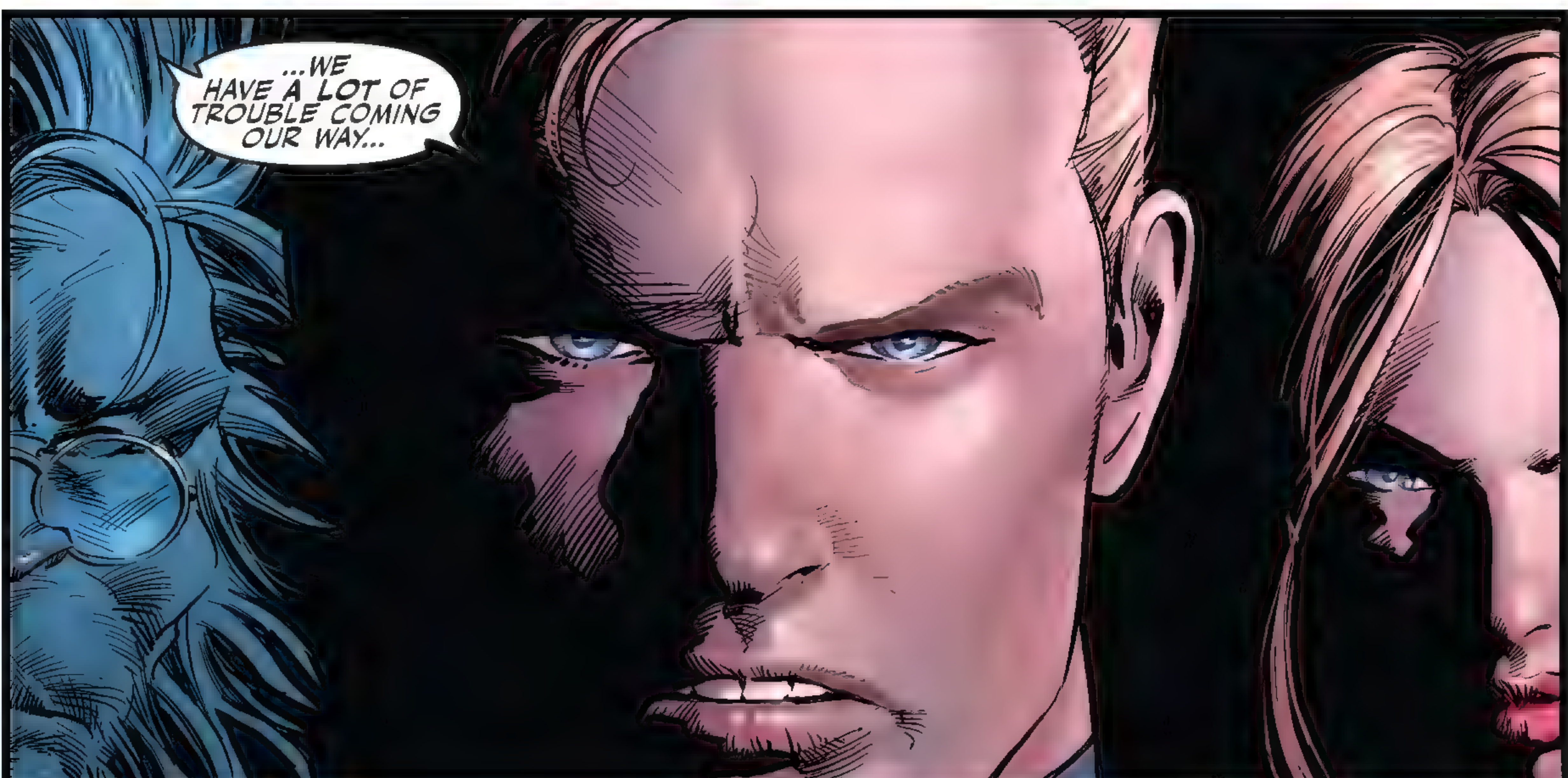
HE SAID THEY WERE INSANE...

...WOULDN'T BELIEVE HE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT THEY WANTED...

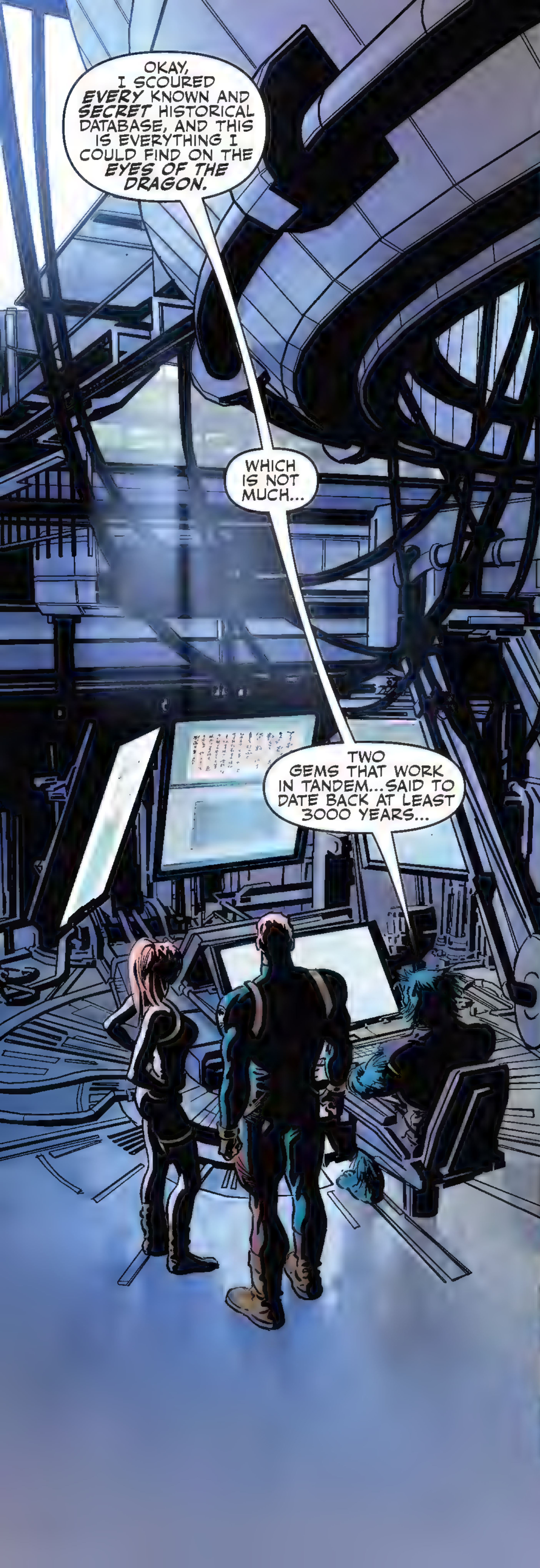


WHAT DID THEY WANT?

THEY WERE LOOKING FOR A SCROLL ABOUT THE EYES OF THE DRAGON. AND IF THAT'S WHAT I THINK IT IS...



...WE HAVE A LOT OF TROUBLE COMING OUR WAY...



OKAY,
I SCoured
EVERY KNOWN AND
SECRET HISTORICAL
DATABASE, AND THIS
IS EVERYTHING I
COULD FIND ON THE
**EYES OF THE
DRAGON.**

WHICH
IS NOT
MUCH...

TWO
GEMS THAT WORK
IN TANDEM... SAID TO
DATE BACK AT LEAST
3000 YEARS...

WHAT
DO THEY DO,
HANK?

THAT'S
WHERE IT GETS
TRICKY...

ACCORDING
TO LEGEND, THEY
WERE IMBUED WITH
**GREAT SPIRITUAL
ENERGY...**

THEY'RE
SAID TO BRING
EXTRAORDINARY
LUCK TO THEIR
OWNER.

AH,
GOOD LUCK
CHARMS...

NOW I SEE
WHY WE'RE SO
WORRIED.

MY FIRST
THOUGHT
TOO... BUT
THEN I FOUND
**ANOTHER
TEXT...**

Turns OUT
THERE'S A LITTLE
KNOWN **LEGEND**
ABOUT THESE
GEMS...

THE... WELL--I
SUPPOSE *WIZARDS*--
WHO CREATED
THEM...

THEY
POURED THE
LAST OF THEIR
ESSENCE INTO
THEM BEFORE
DEATH.



AND IF
PROPERLY *USED*, THE
EYES OF THE DRAGON
COMPLETE A SPELL THAT
CAN BRING SOMEONE
BACK...

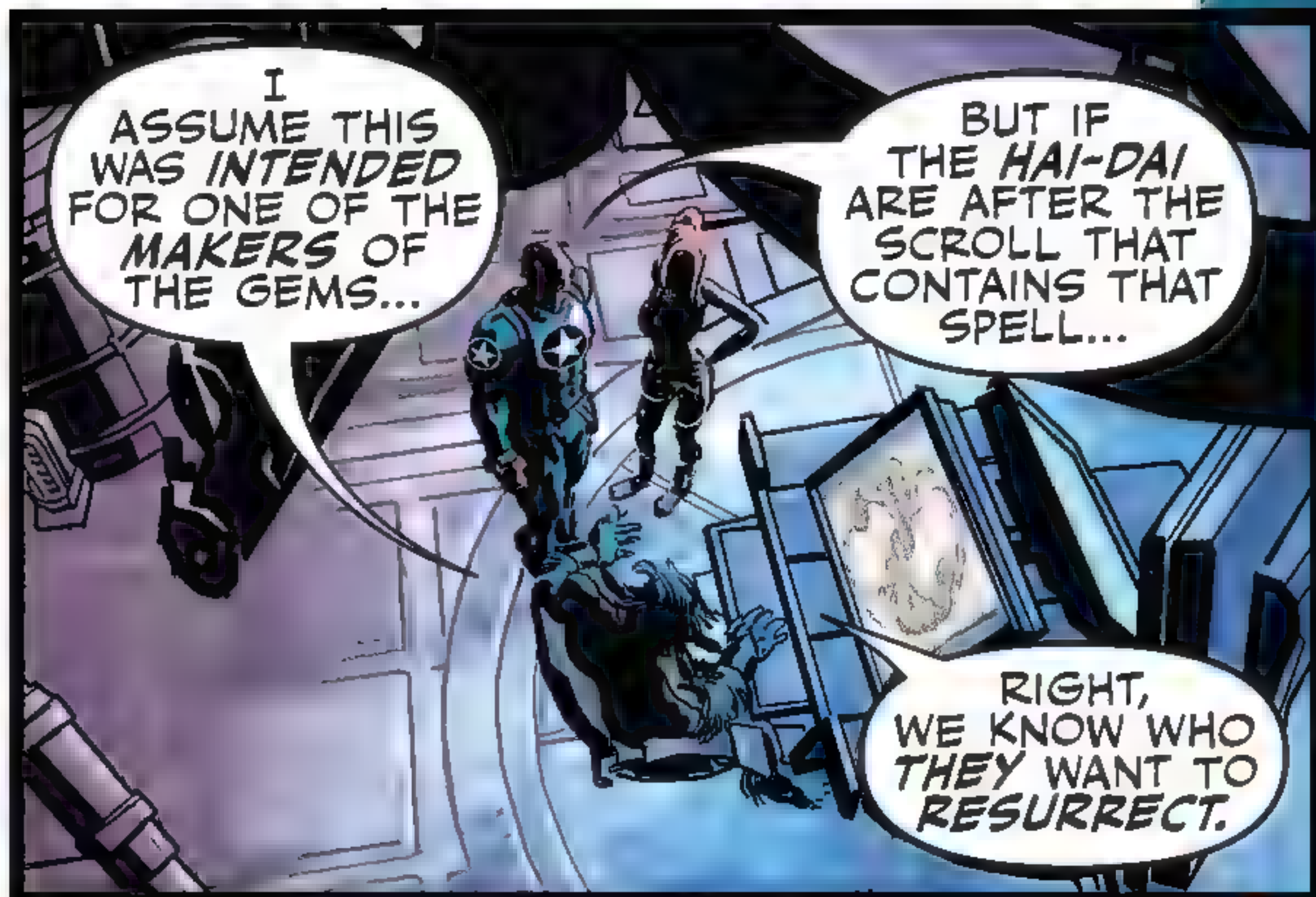
...FROM
DEATH...



I
ASSUME THIS
WAS *INTENDED*
FOR ONE OF THE
MAKERS OF
THE GEMS...

BUT IF
THE *HAI-DAI*
ARE AFTER THE
SCROLL THAT
CONTAINS THAT
SPELL...

RIGHT,
WE KNOW WHO
THEY WANT TO
RESURRECT.



AH,
GREAT...

EXACTLY...

GET
PETE WISDOM
ON THE LINE.



WE NEED
TO FIND
SHANG-CHI,
NOW.

HE
JUST BECAME
A *PRIME*
TARGET.



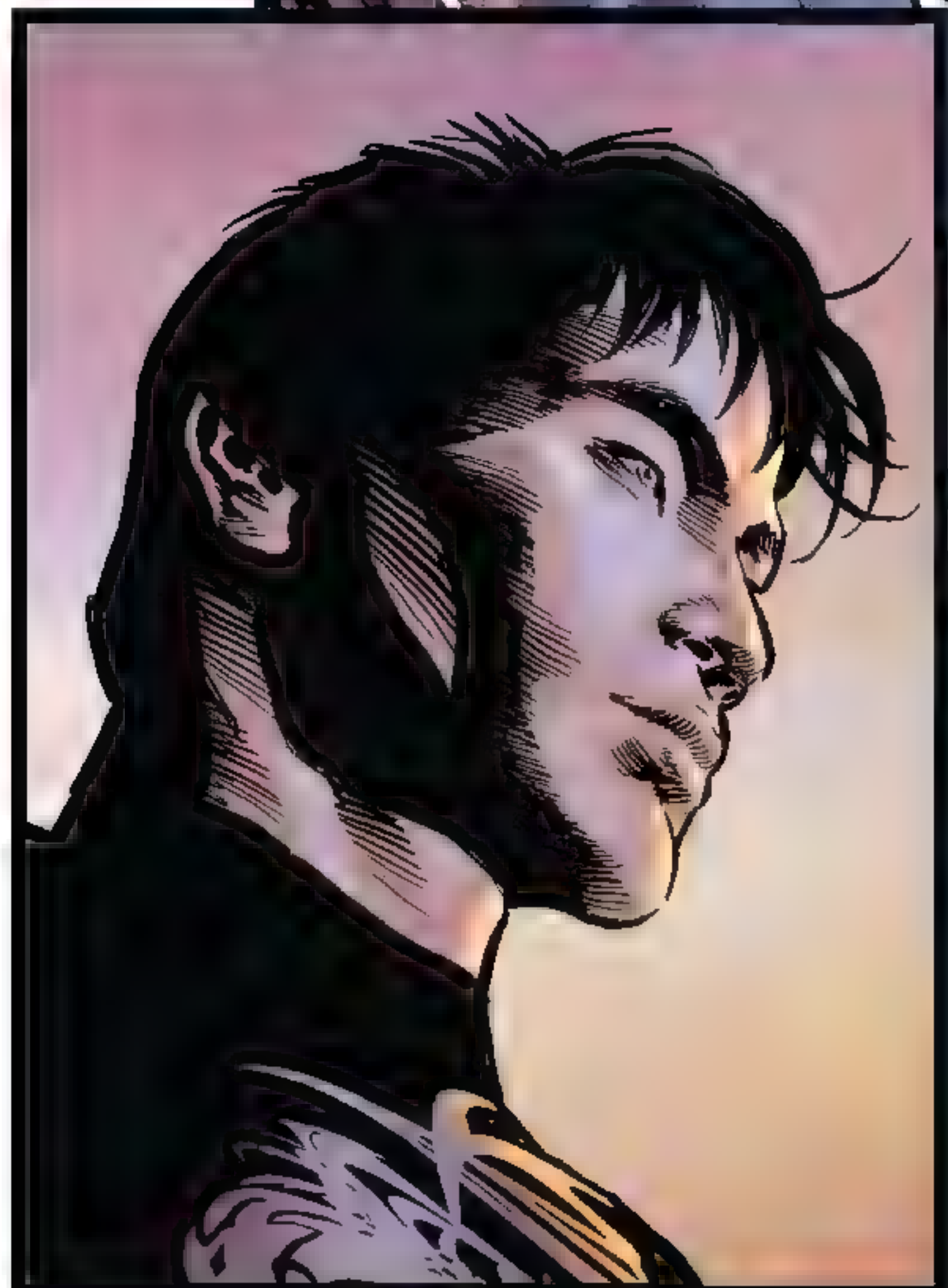
NOW--HIGH ABOVE HONG KONG

AND THAT
PRETTY MUCH
BRINGS YOU UP
TO SPEED...

OTHER THAN
WHAT COMES
NEXT.



IT'S SO
BEAUTIFUL
UP HERE... SO
PEACEFUL...

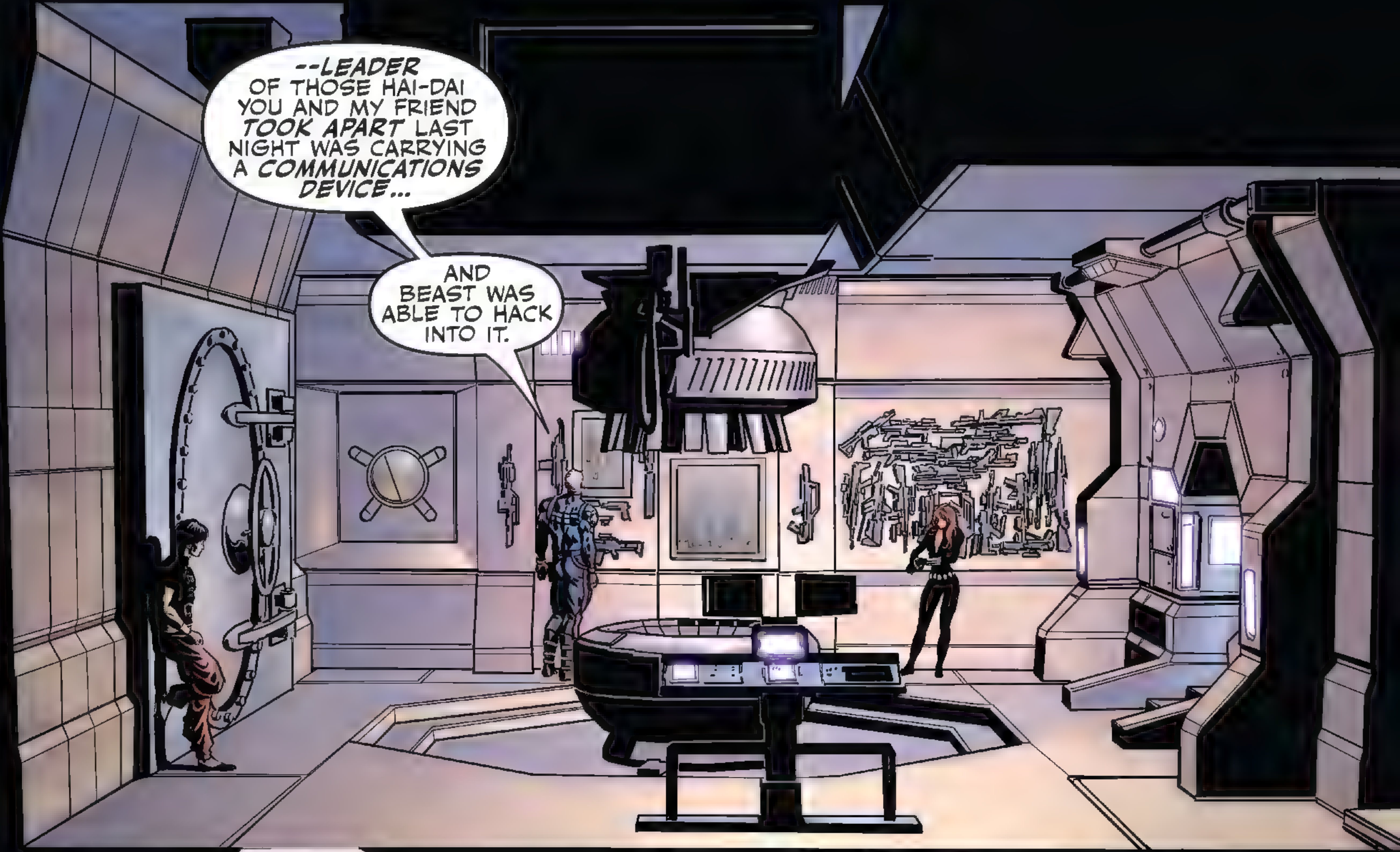


UH...IS HE
GONNA START
MEDITATING?

BE
QUIET,
ERIC.



SO,
WHAT DOES
COME NEXT,
COMMANDER
ROGERS?



--LEADER
OF THOSE HAI-DAI
YOU AND MY FRIEND
TOOK APART LAST
NIGHT WAS CARRYING
A COMMUNICATIONS
DEVICE...

AND
BEAST WAS
ABLE TO HACK
INTO IT.

WHOEVER
IS GIVING
THEM ORDERS
HAD **ANOTHER**
TARGET ON HIS
LIST...

WE'RE
GOING TO
GET TO THAT
OBJECTIVE
BEFORE
THEM.

WILL THE
PRINCE OF
ORPHANS BE
JOINING US?

NO...
HE'S FOLLOWING A
DIFFERENT LEAD WITH
ANOTHER TEAM
MEMBER...

I'D
HEARD
LEGENDS
OF HIM...

...BUT I
THOUGHT
THEY WERE
JUST **THAT...**
LEGENDS.

I'LL MAKE SURE YOU
TWO GET **BETTER**
ACQUAINTED AFTER
WE STOP YOUR FATHER
RETURNING FROM
THE DEAD.

RETURNING?
YOU MEAN HE ISN'T
ALREADY BACK?





BUT, THE *HAI-DAI*? THEY WOULDN'T BE *ACTIVE* IF HE WAS STILL--

I CAN'T EXPLAIN THAT...

...BUT OUR INTEL SAYS THEY'RE STILL LOOKING FOR THE *MEANS* TO BRING THE OLD MAN BACK.



SO, ARE YOU IN OR ARE YOU OUT?

IN... OF COURSE.



MY FATHER'S EVIL HAS ALREADY DONE TOO MUCH DAMAGE TO THIS WORLD...

AGREED. HERE, YOU'LL NEED THIS.



WAIT-- WHY DO I NEED A PARACHUTE, WIDOW?

OH... DID STEVE FORGET TO SAY WE'D BE BREAKING A LOT OF LAWS TONIGHT?



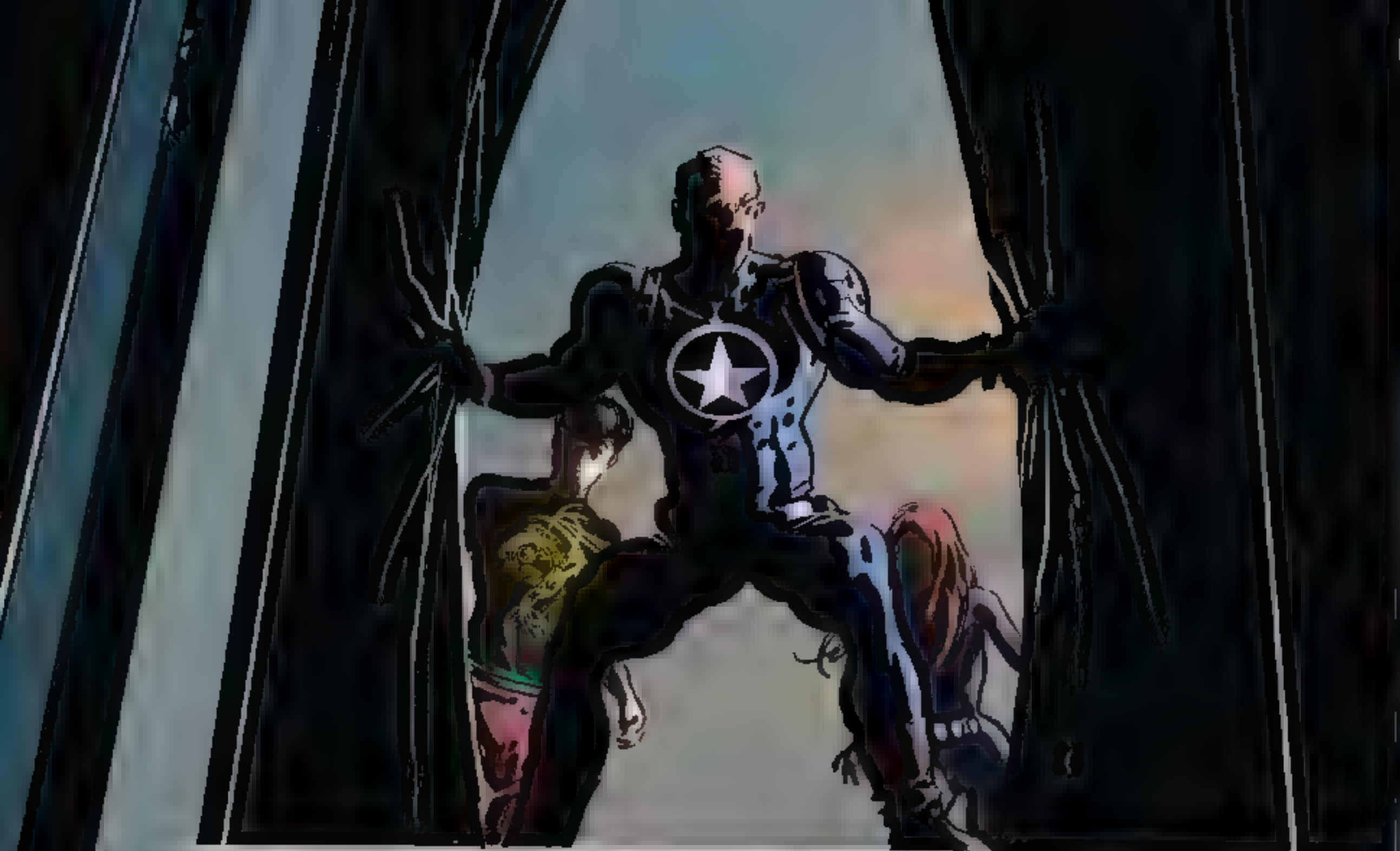
"OKAY, HERE'S
THE PLAN:

"THERE'S
CURRENTLY
AN EXHIBIT
OF ANCIENT
CHINESE ART
AT THE
INTERNATIONAL
FINANCE
CENTRE...

"THAT'S
OUR
TARGET. WE
INFILTRATE
FROM THE
ROOF...

"...PREFERABLY
UNSEEN.





"FROM THERE, THE
ELEVATOR SHAFT
IS OUR BEST BET
FOR STAYING OUT
OF SIGHT.



"WE *RAPPEL*
APPROXIMATELY
30 STORIES...

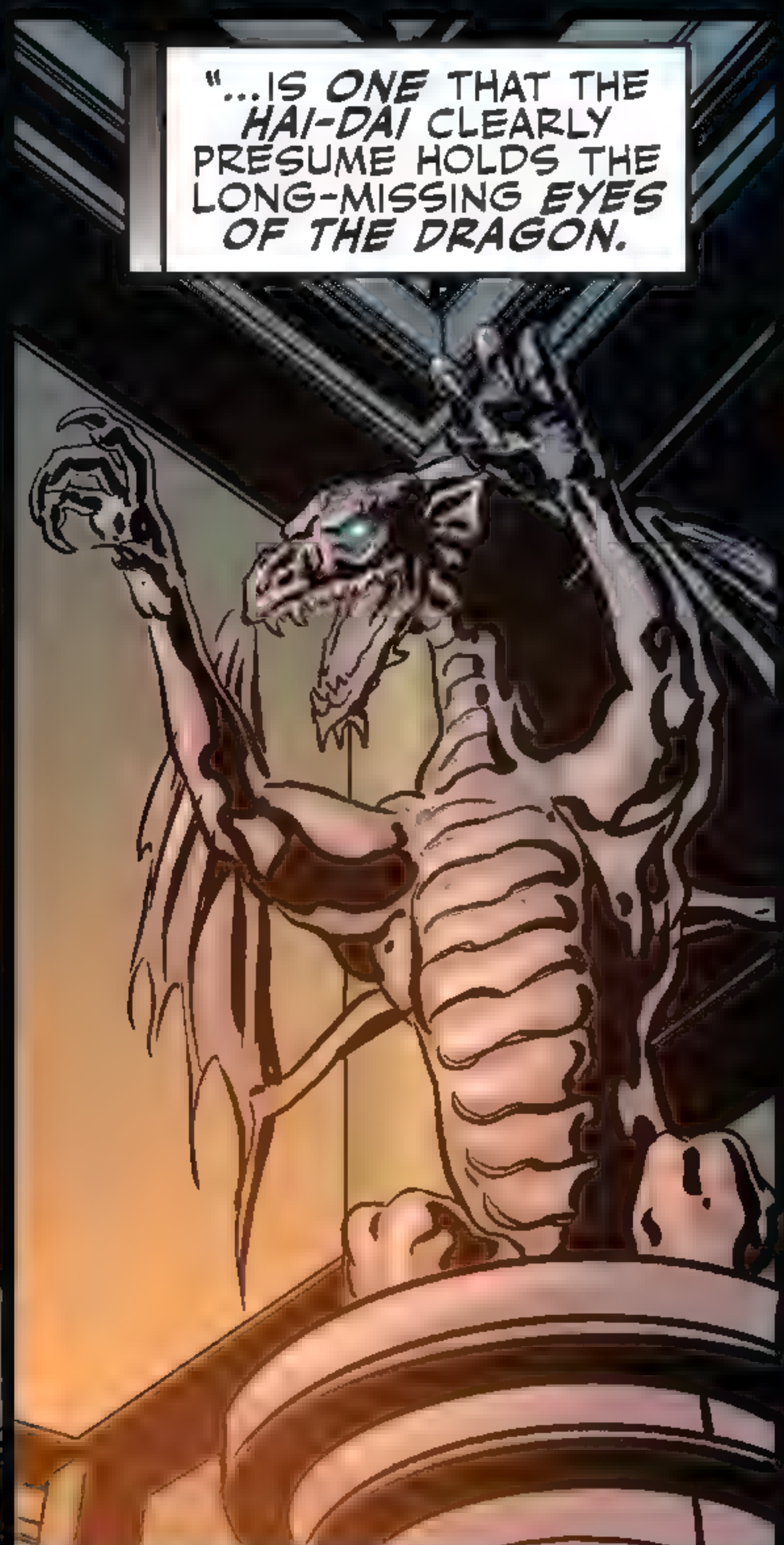


"...TO WHERE THE
EXHIBIT IS, ON
THE 55TH FLOOR.

"AMONG THE
STATUES ON
DISPLAY..."



"...IS ONE THAT THE
HAI-DAI CLEARLY
PRESUME HOLDS THE
LONG-MISSING EYES
OF THE DRAGON."



"THAT STATUE
ORIGINATES
IN THE SAME
REGION THE
GEMS WERE
LAST SEEN."



"SO WE GRAB
THE EYES
AND--"



UH-OH...



WHAT'S
WRONG?



THESE
GEMS ARE
GLASS...

WE'VE
BEEN--



--SET UP...



ARE WE *CERTAIN*
MY FATHER IS NOT YET
RESURRECTED?

BECAUSE
THIS *DOES*
FEEL LIKE HIS
STYLE.

HOW
DID YOU KNOW
WHERE THEY WERE,
THORNDRAKE?

THE SHADOW
COUNCIL KNOWS WHERE
EVERYTHING IS HIDING IN
THIS WORLD...

AFTER ALL,
WE FOUND YOU,
DIDN'T WE?

SO YOU
HAVE...

HOW MUCH
LONGER UNTIL
THEY REACH THE
CHAMBER?

DON'T
WORRY, IT'S ALL
ON SCHEDULE...AS
I PROMISED.



REMEMBER WHO YOU'RE SPEAKING TO... DO NOT *CHIDE* ME.

NO. YOU REMEMBER WHO *YOU'RE* TALKING TO.



YOU'RE ONLY *HALF-ALIVE* BECAUSE OF ME...

WE DON'T HAVE TO *FINISH* THE SPELL...

WHAT? HOLD ON...



THEY FOUND THE CHAMBER, DIRECTOR THORNDRAKE.

WE HAVE THE *EYES*.



THEN THERE'S JUST ONE INGREDIENT LEFT TO ACQUIRE...

YOU MEAN, MY *TRAITOROUS* SON?



YES. WE LEFT A BIG ENOUGH TRAIL FOR HIM...

...SO LET'S HOPE HE *FOLLOWED* IT.



OH,
I *KNOW*
SHANG-CHI...
HE WON'T
BE ABLE TO
RESIST.

AND COME
THE NIGHT OF
THE *WANING MOON*
IN THREE DAYS'
TIME...



...WE WILL
DRAIN ALL HIS LIFE
AND BRING ME *FULLY*
INTO THIS DREADFUL
WORLD...

...AND IT WILL BE
TERRIBLE.





THESE HAI-DAI
WARRIORS ARE MORE
ACCOMPLISHED THAN
THE FIRST ONES
SENT AFTER ME.

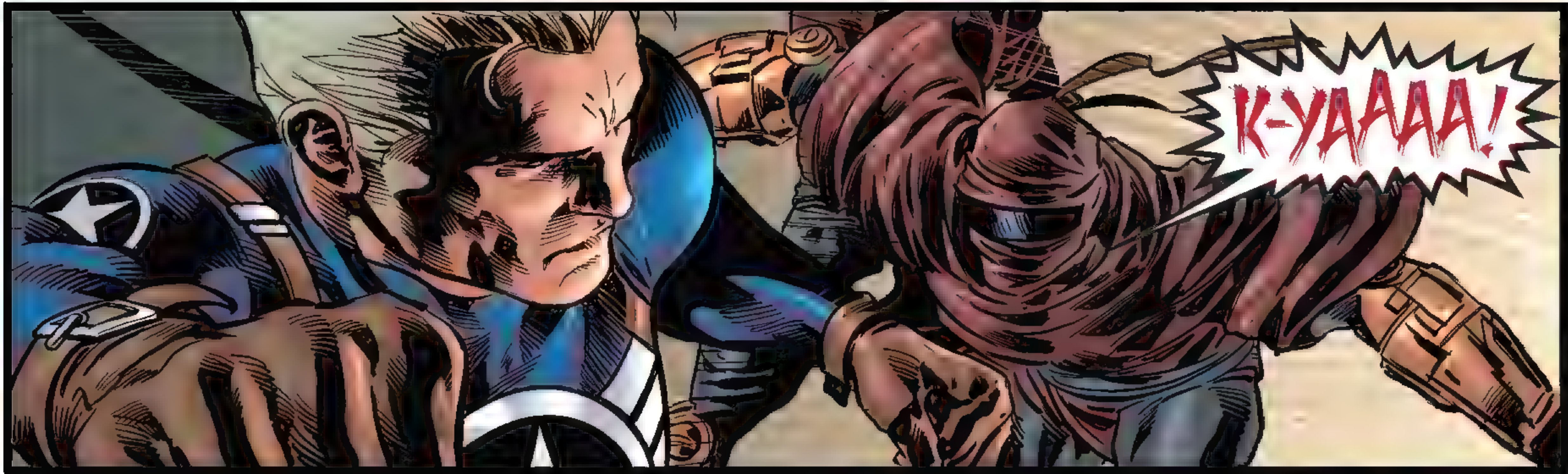
AND THEY
OUTNUMBER
US, AS WELL.

BUT THEN, THEY
WOULD...SINCE
THIS IS A TRAP.

⟨HE WAS
MEANT TO BE
ALONE...⟩

⟨THEY
ARE SKILLFUL
FIGHTERS.⟩

⟨CONCENTRATE
ON THE MASTER'S SON...
I WILL DISTRACT HIS
COMRADES.⟩







DAMN IT!

≡HKK-HKKK≡!



NATASHA,
STOP.



YOU CAN'T
EVEN *SEE*
WHAT YOU'RE
SHOOTING
AT.

IT DOESN'T
MATTER...

...THEY'VE
ALREADY TAKEN
HIM.

I KNOW.
BUT IT'S ALL
RIGHT...

WHAT DOES
THAT MEAN?
THEY HAVE
OUR MAN.

HOW IS
THAT ALL
RIGHT?

BECAUSE
I HAVE A
BACK-UP
PLAN.

WELL, YOU
COULD HAVE
TOLD ME...

I NEEDED
THIS FIGHT TO
FEEL *REAL*. SO
THEY WOULDN'T
SMELL A SETUP.

YOU'RE
ACTING MORE
LIKE NICK FURY
EVERY DAY...

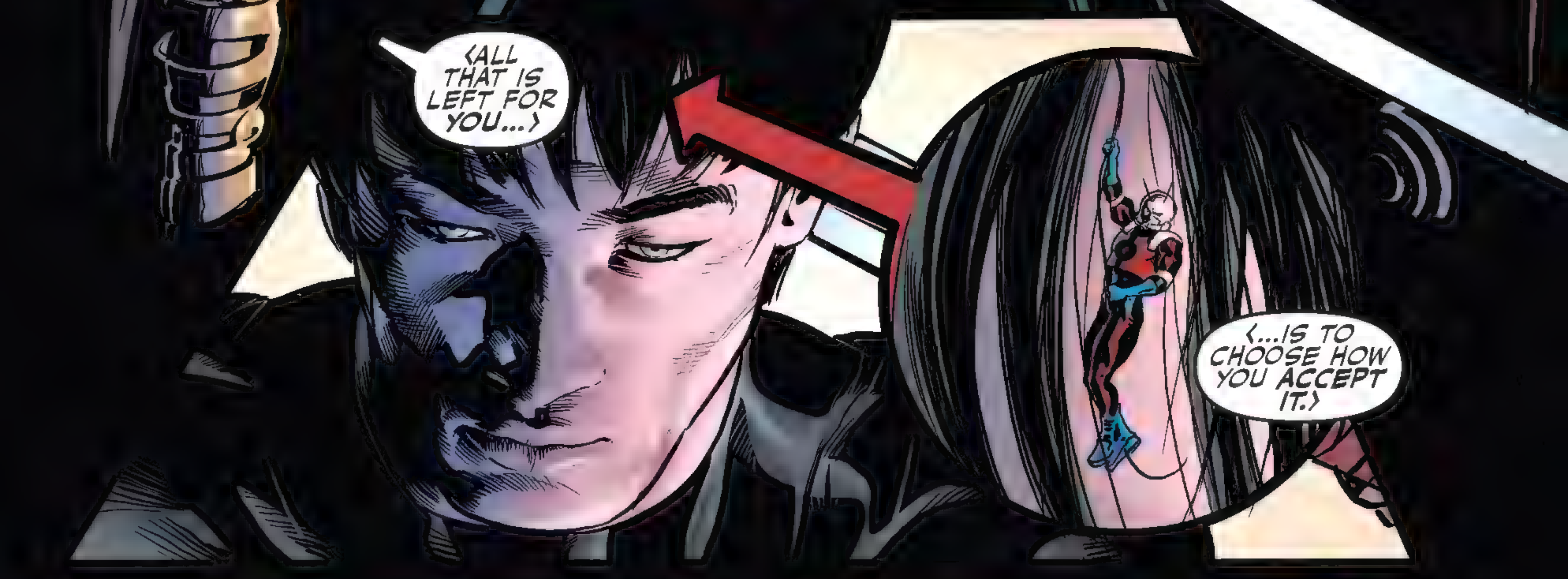
"...SO WHAT IS
THIS BACK-UP
PLAN, THEN?"



<ARE YOU
READY FOR THE
END, BASTARD
CHILD?>

<BECAUSE
IT QUICKLY
APPROACHES
FOR YOU.>

<BLEED
HIM, MY
BROTHER.>



<ALL
THAT IS
LEFT FOR
YOU...>

<...IS TO
CHOOSE HOW
YOU ACCEPT
IT.>



BACK-UP
PLAN TO
COMMAND...



...IT'S
LOOKING
UGLY UP
HERE...
SO...







I KNOW.
WE'RE GOING
DOWN...
CRAP.

I'M NOT
USUALLY THIS
BIG...DON'T
KNOW MY OWN
STRENGTH...

WE
HAVE TO
MOVE.

HANG
ON...

...SUIT
WASN'T MEANT
TO FLY AT FULL
SIZE...

WUUK



OH,
MAN...
...ROGERS
IS GONNA
KILL ME...

I
SUPPOSE
WE SHALL
SEE...



MOVE IT--LET'S GO!



TAKE US UP FAST, NATASHA...

SO WE CAN AVOID AN INTERNATIONAL INCIDENT.

RIGHT.



IT WAS MY FAULT, BOSS... I **SMASHED** THE WHOLE CONTROL PANEL...

DON'T BEAT YOURSELF UP, ERIC. I DIDN'T SEE ANY CASUALTIES ON THE GROUND...

AND YOU **SAVED** OUR MAN...

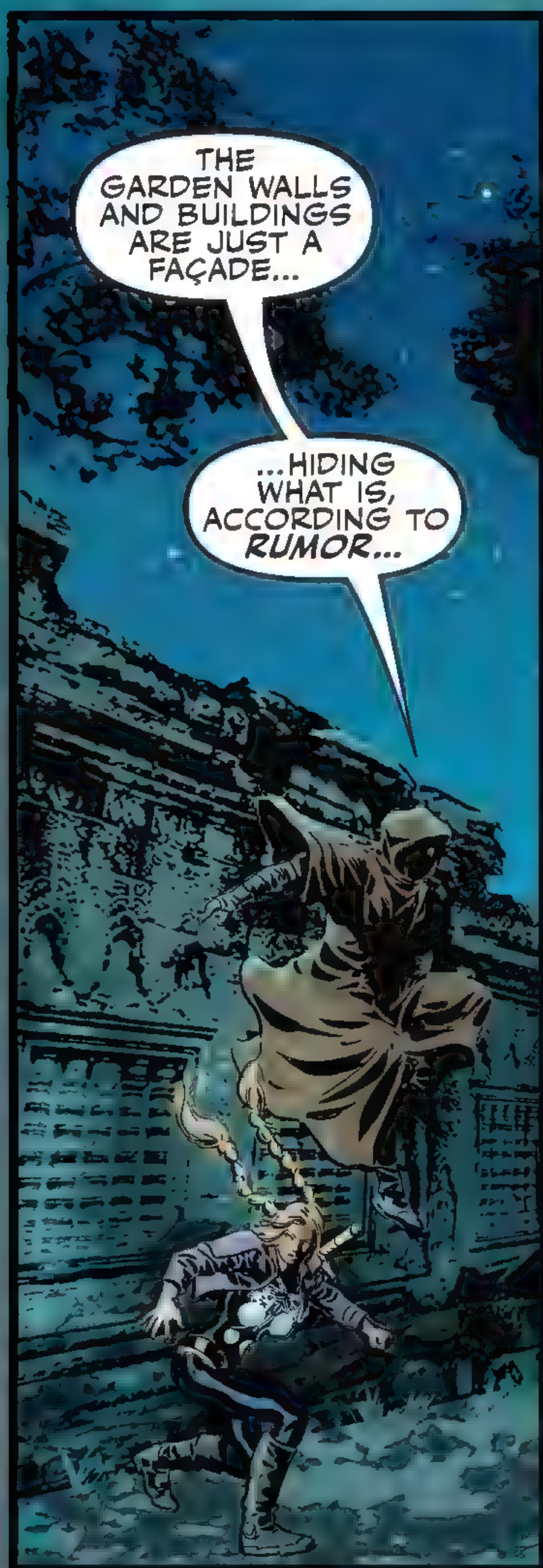


...LET'S JUST HOPE **PRINCE OF ORPHANS** AND **VALKYRIE** HAVE BETTER LUCK TONIGHT...



WHAT
IS THIS
PLACE?

A
HIDDEN **SHRINE**,
VALKYRIE...



THE
GARDEN WALLS
AND BUILDINGS
ARE JUST A
FAÇADE...

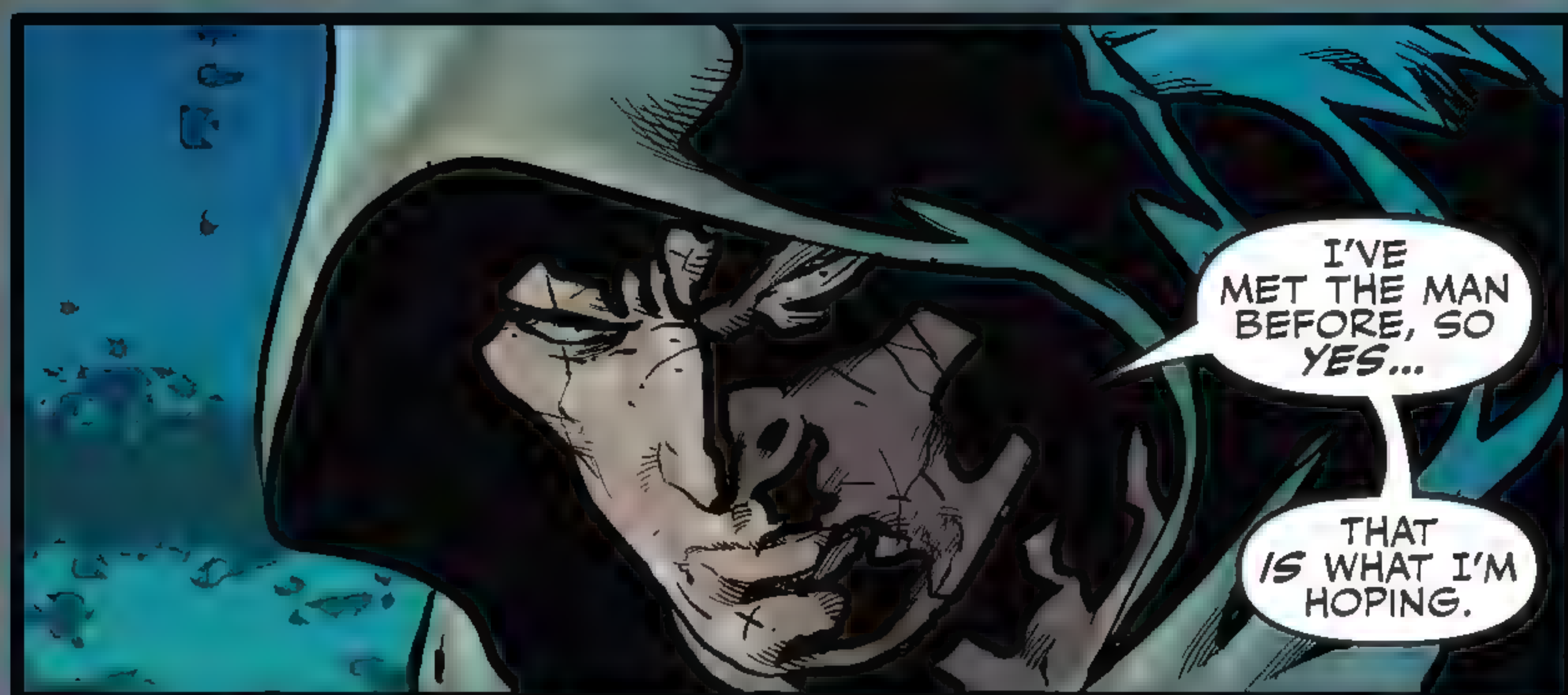
...HIDING
WHAT IS,
ACCORDING TO
RUMOR...



...THE FINAL
RESTING PLACE
OF SHANG CHI'S
FATHER.

THAT'S
WHAT WE'RE
HOPING, YOU
MEAN?

THAT HIS
ANCIENT EVIL
STILL LIES
BURIED?



I'VE
MET THE MAN
BEFORE, SO
YES...

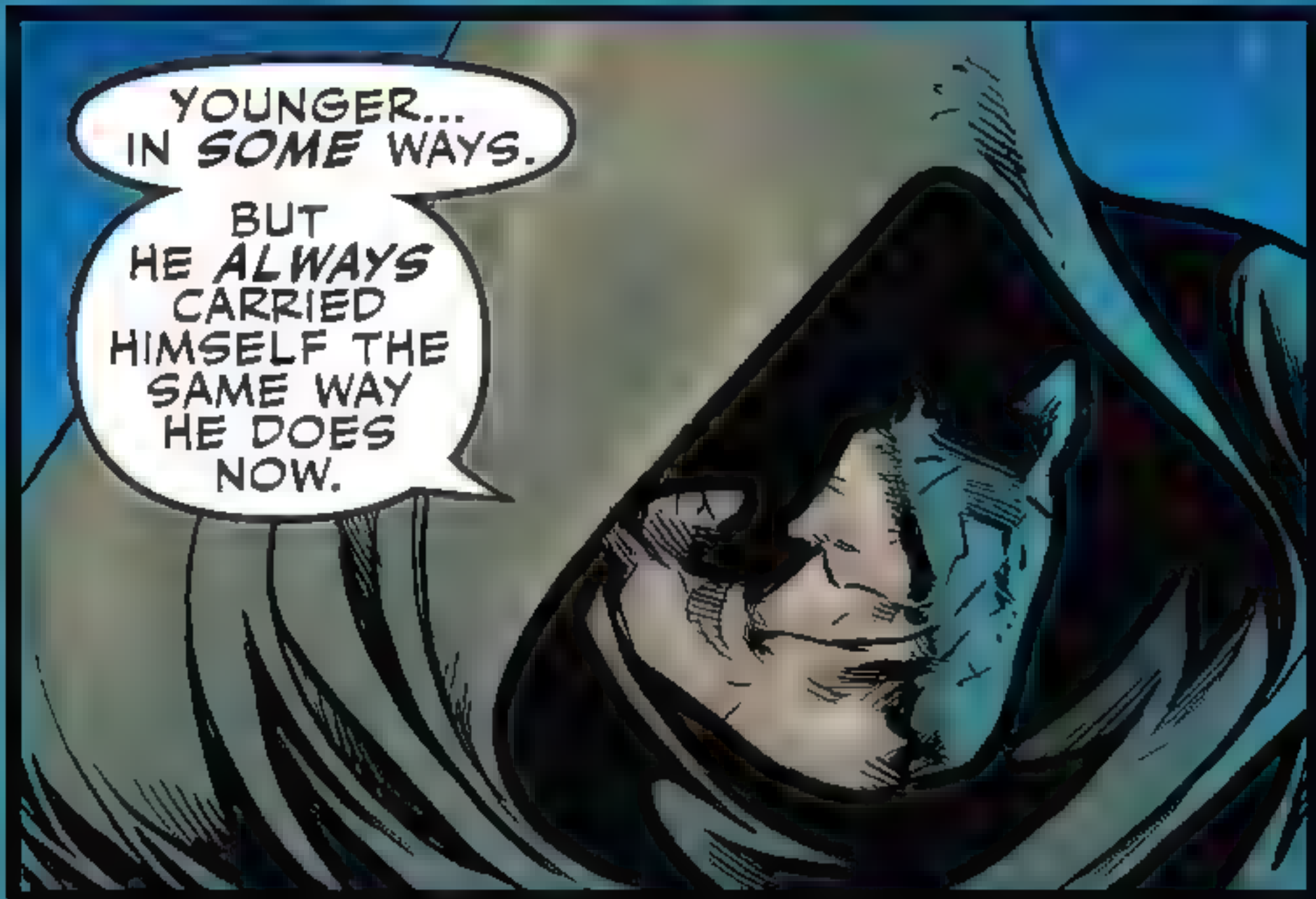
THAT
IS WHAT I'M
HOPING.



I UNDERSTAND YOU AND STEVE ROGERS ARE OLD **BROTHERS-IN-ARMS?**

WE HAD A FEW MISSIONS TOGETHER, BACK IN THE WAR.

WHAT WAS HE **LIKE** THEN?



YOUNGER... IN **SOME** WAYS.

BUT HE **ALWAYS** CARRIED HIMSELF THE SAME WAY HE DOES NOW.



WITH A GREAT **WEIGHT** ON HIS SHOULDERS?



EXACTLY.



OH... HOLD IT.

I THINK WE JUST FOUND WHAT WE WEREN'T EVEN **LOOKING** FOR.

I **KNOW** THAT UNIFORM...



I
DO, TOO...
ROGERS
HAS HAD ME
SEARCHING
FOR THESE
MEN.

WHY ARE
THEY IN THIS
PLACE?

LET'S
FIND
OUT...

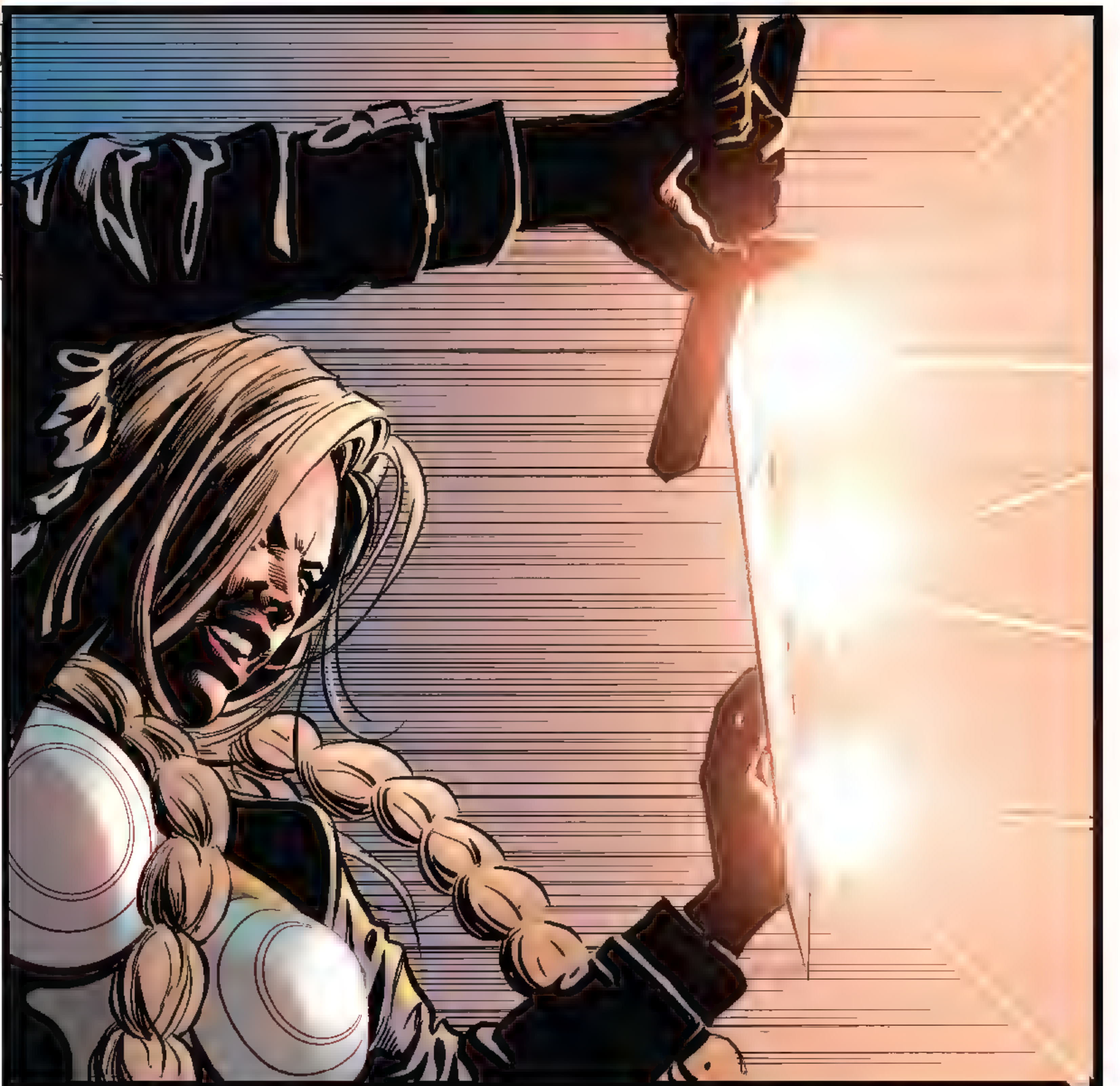
KRAAAK

GUHH--

FREEZE!

RATATATATAAT

RATATATATAAT



AW,
GOD--





I DON'T THINK THEY'RE HERE GUARDING ANYTHING...



...THEY WERE LEFT BEHIND TO SEE IF ANYONE ELSE CAME LOOKING.



GRAB ONE AND LET'S GET TO OUR EXTRACTION.

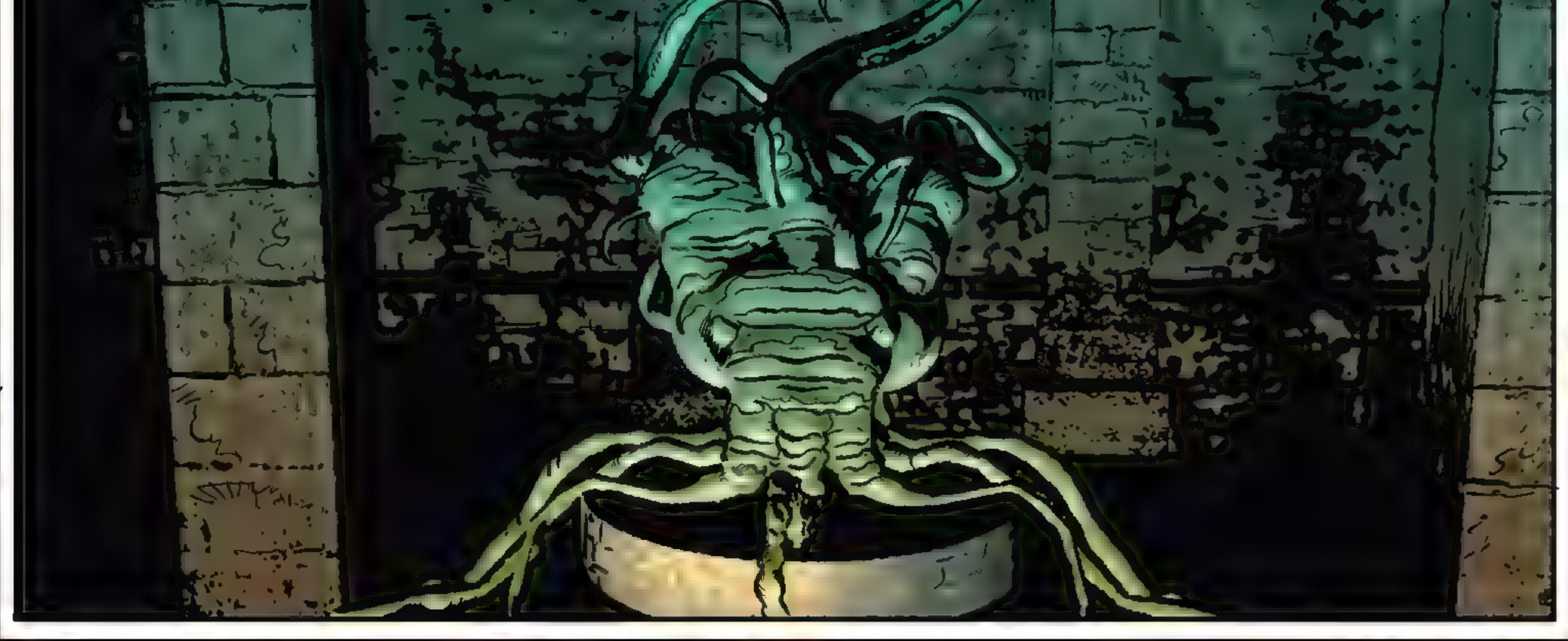


AT LEAST THE NIGHT ISN'T A TOTAL LOSS...

INDEED, NOW WE CAN FIND OUT EXACTLY WHO IT IS WE'VE BEEN CHASING.







WAAH WAAH
NUCAH IN WAAH
WAAH



DIRECTOR THORNDRAKE?



WHAT HAVE I TOLD YOU ABOUT THIS ROOM, MAX?

I'M SORRY, SIR...BUT THERE'S A PROBLEM...



WELL, ACTUALLY...TWO PROBLEMS.



AND THIS COULDN'T WAIT FOR ME TO FINISH MY RITUAL?



YOUR GUEST DIDN'T SEEM TO THINK SO.

MY GUEST SEEMS TO THINK A LOT OF THINGS...



YOUR PLAN HAS **FAILED**... MY BOY IS IN THE WIND.

AND HE HAS MORE THAN JUST **BRITISH SPIES** ON HIS SIDE THIS TIME.



I SHOULD **NEVER** HAVE JOINED FORCES WITH YOU PEOPLE.



JOINED FORCES?

WE DUG YOU OUT OF A **GRAVE**.



YOU OWE YOUR **EVERY** CONSCIOUS THOUGHT TO US RIGHT NOW.

THERE ARE JUST **TWO DAYS** LEFT TO COMPLETE THE **RITUAL**!

OR YOU MAY AS WELL HAVE **LEFT ME** THERE!



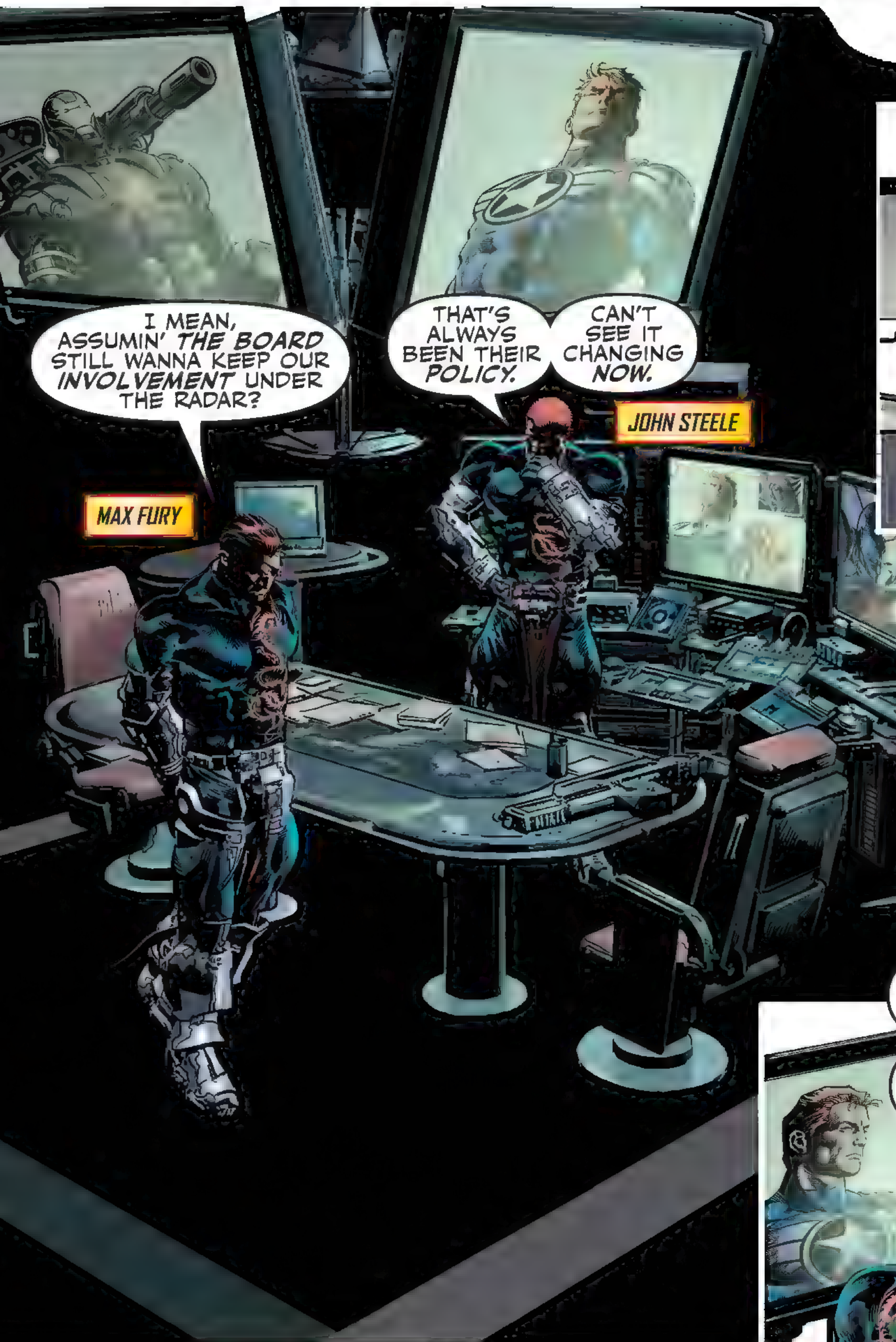
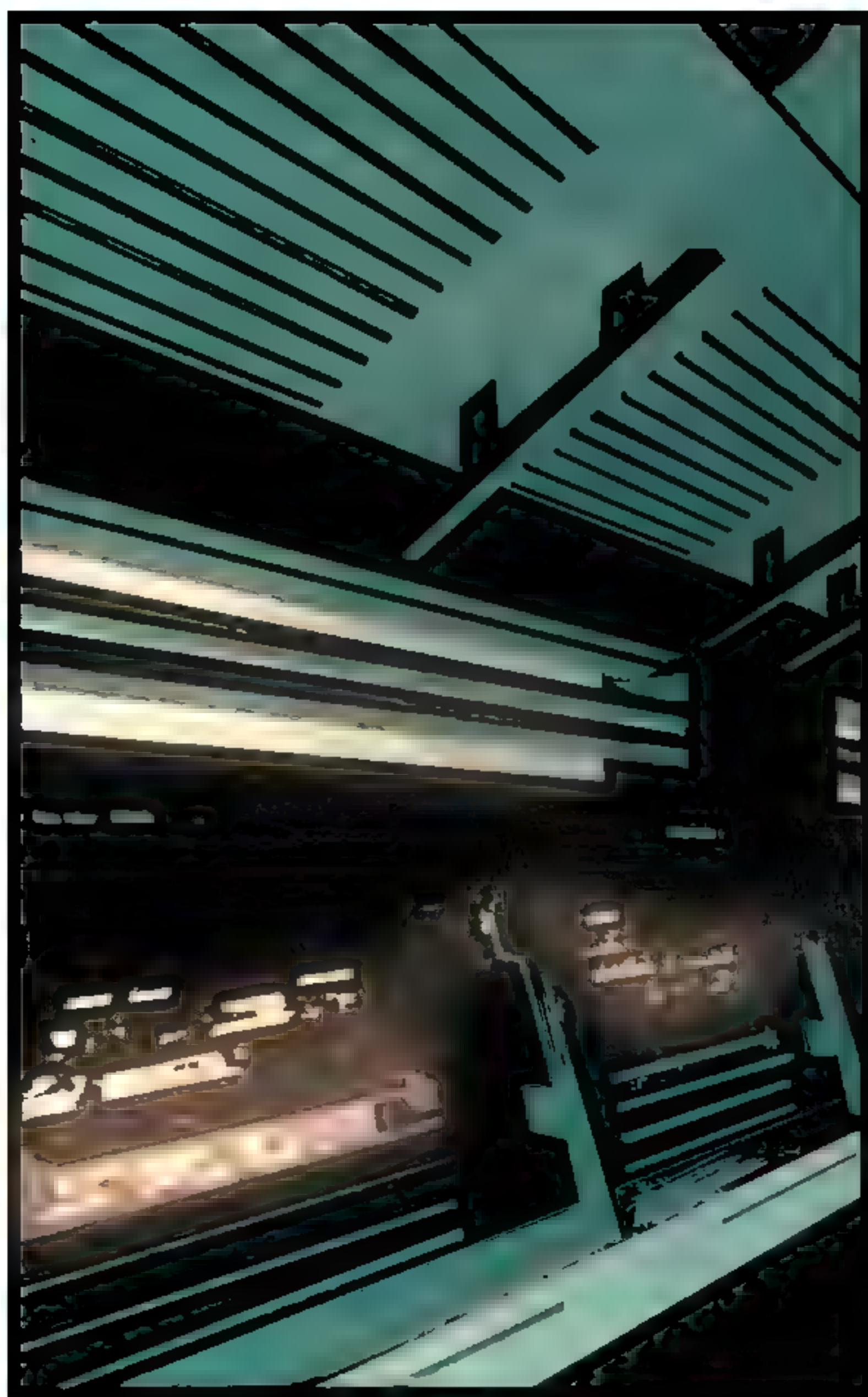
DON'T WORRY...MY MEN HAVE IT **WELL** IN HAND...



JOHN STEELE
America's real first
Super-Soldier







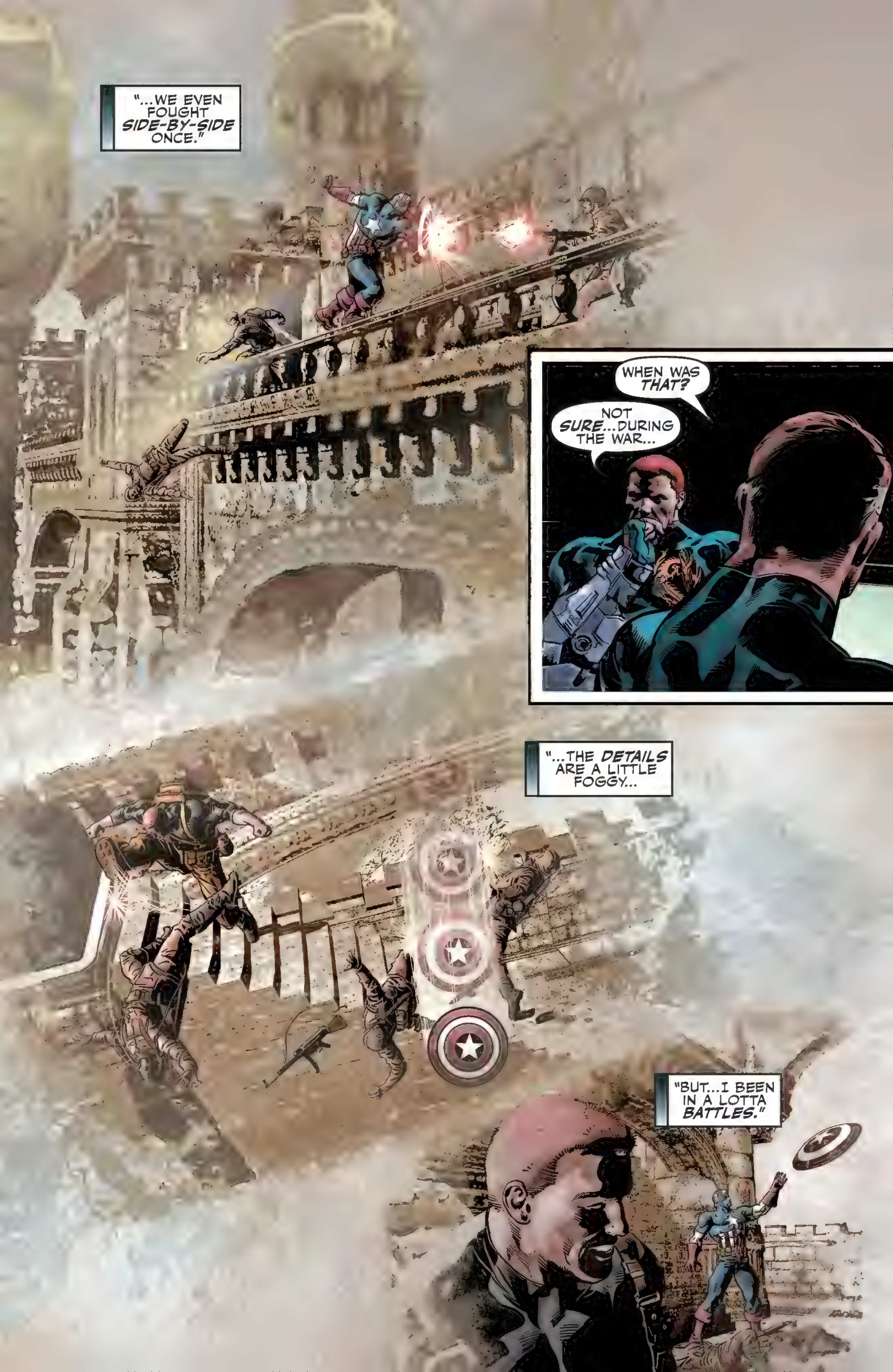
"...WE EVEN
FOUGHT
SIDE-BY-SIDE
ONCE."

WHEN WAS
THAT?

NOT
SURE...DURING
THE WAR...

"...THE *DETAILS*
ARE A LITTLE
FOGGY..."

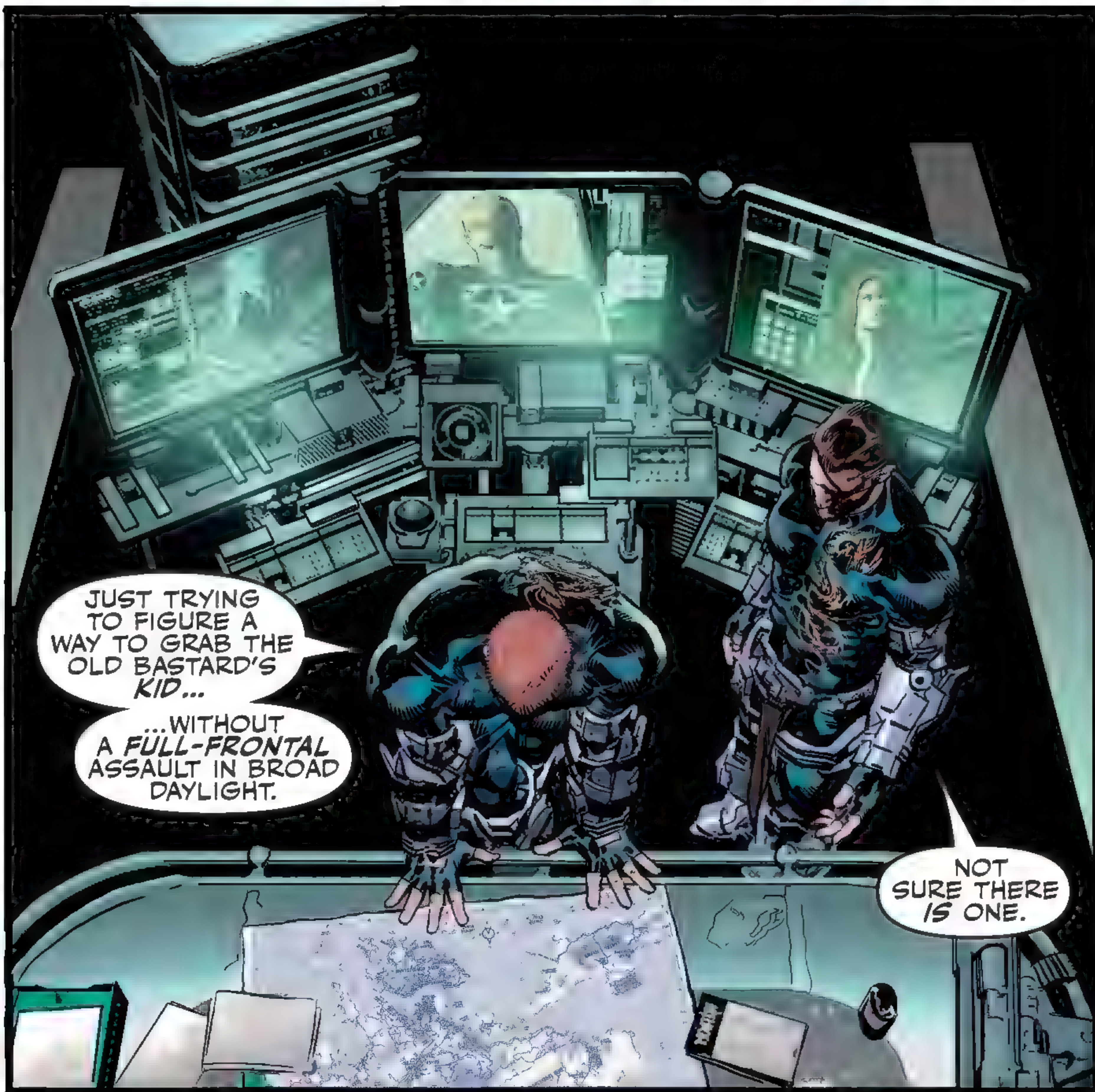
"BUT...I BEEN
IN A LOTTA
BATTLES."





ANYWAY,
ROGERS
DOESN'T
WORRY
ME.

I CAN
TAKE HIM
IF IT COMES
TO THAT.



JUST TRYING
TO FIGURE A
WAY TO GRAB THE
OLD BASTARD'S
KID...

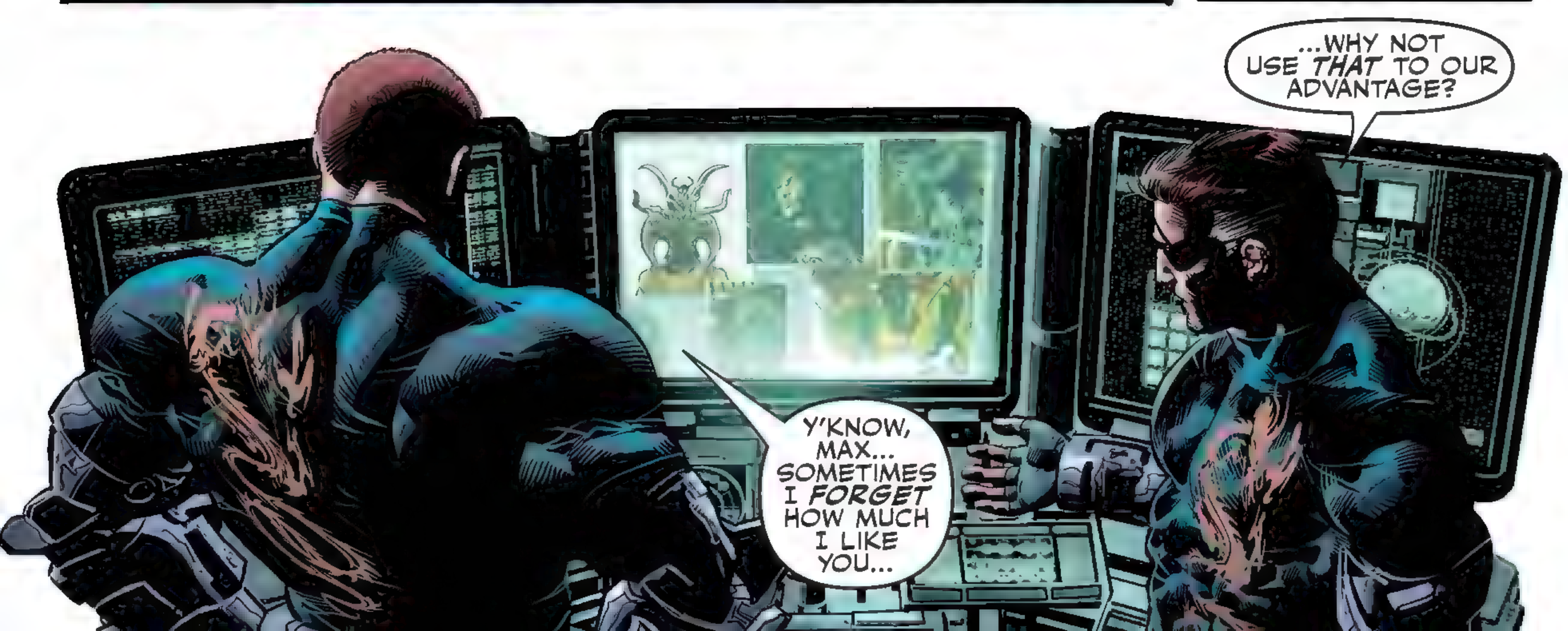
...WITHOUT
A FULL-FRONTAL
ASSAULT IN BROAD
DAYLIGHT.

NOT
SURE THERE
IS ONE.



BUT...
DOES THE
PUBLIC OUTING
HAVE TO BE
US?

I MEAN, THEY
ALREADY KNOW
ABOUT THE OLD
BASTARD...



Y'KNOW,
MAX...
SOMETIMES
I FORGET
HOW MUCH
I LIKE
YOU...

...WHY NOT
USE THAT TO OUR
ADVANTAGE?

OKAY, SO
HERE'S WHAT
I'VE TURNED
UP...



I SPENT
THE LAST DAY
CROSS-REFERENCING
EVERYTHING I COULD
FIND ON BOTH THE EYES
OF THE DRAGON
STONES...

...AND ON
SHANG-CHI'S
FATHER'S
HISTORY.

TRYING
TO FIGURE OUT
WHAT HE KNEW
ABOUT THE
GEMS...

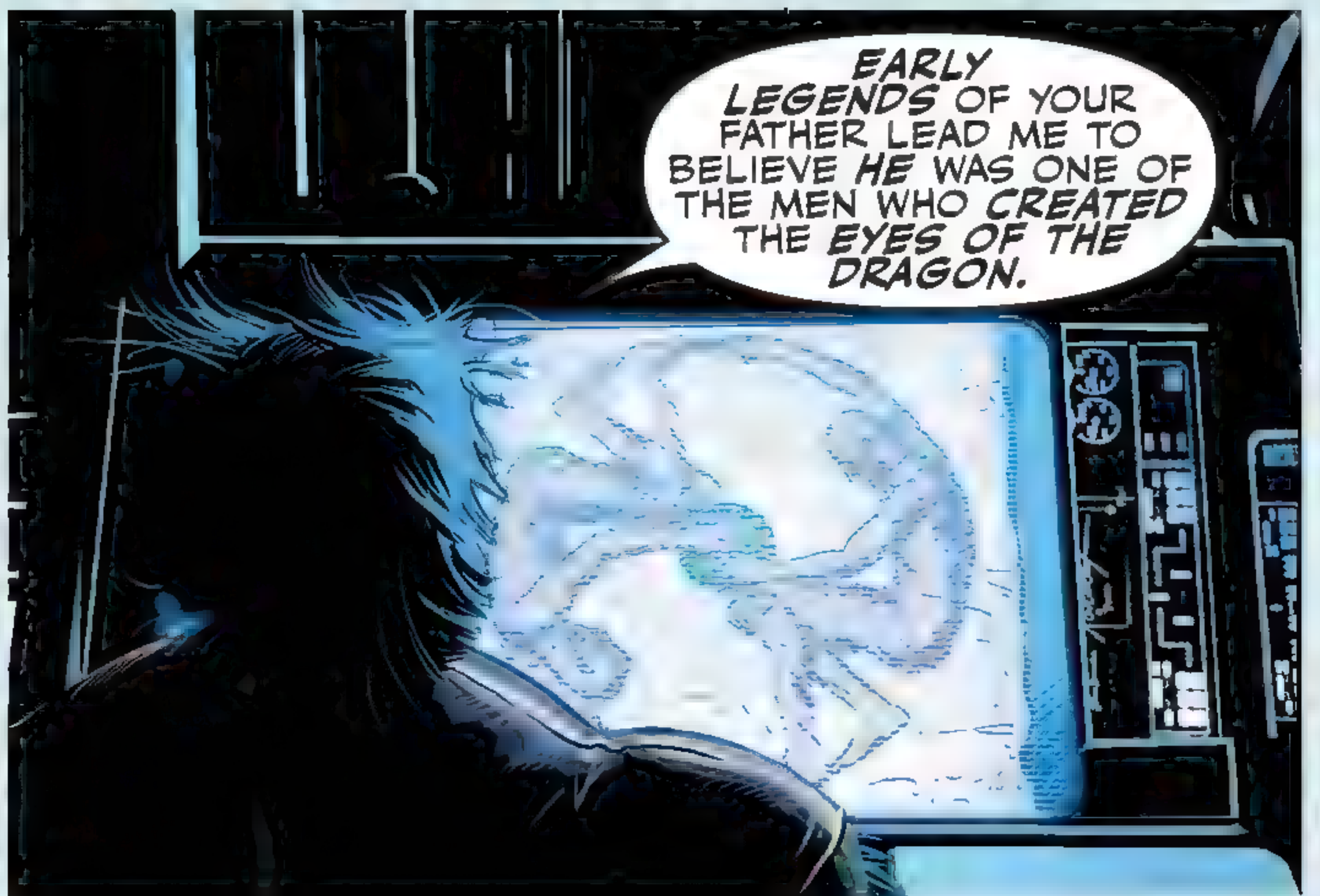
...OR
IF HE'D
USED THEM
BEFORE.

AND I
STUMBLED ACROSS
SOMETHING...

SOMETHING
ABOUT MY
FATHER?

IT'S JUST
A THEORY
RIGHT NOW,
BUT YES.

EARLY
LEGENDS OF YOUR
FATHER LEAD ME TO
BELIEVE HE WAS ONE OF
THE MEN WHO CREATED
THE EYES OF THE
DRAGON.

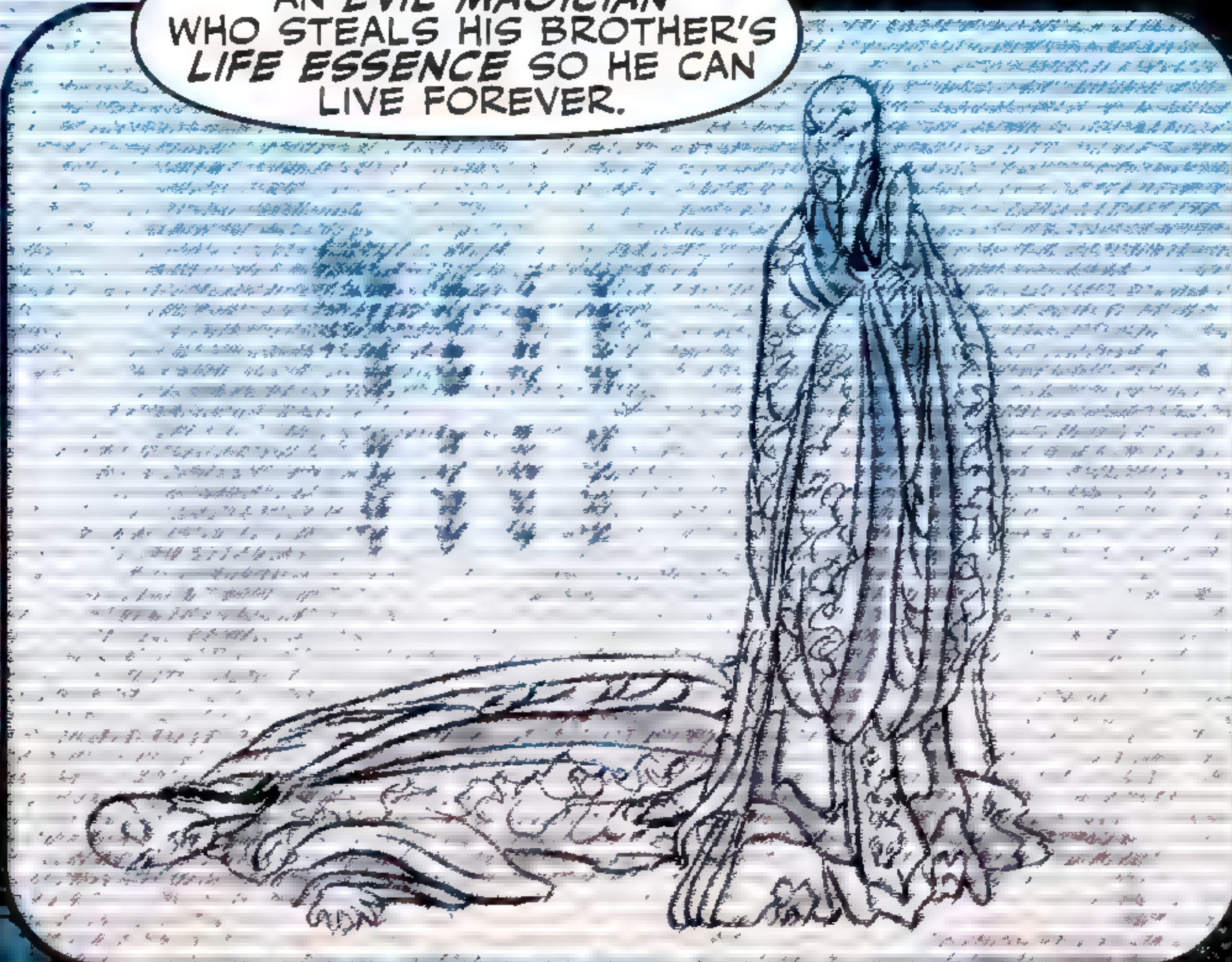


THE
SORCERERS
WHO GAVE THE
GEMS THEIR POWER
WERE **BROTHERS**,
ACCORDING TO
SEVERAL
TEXTS...



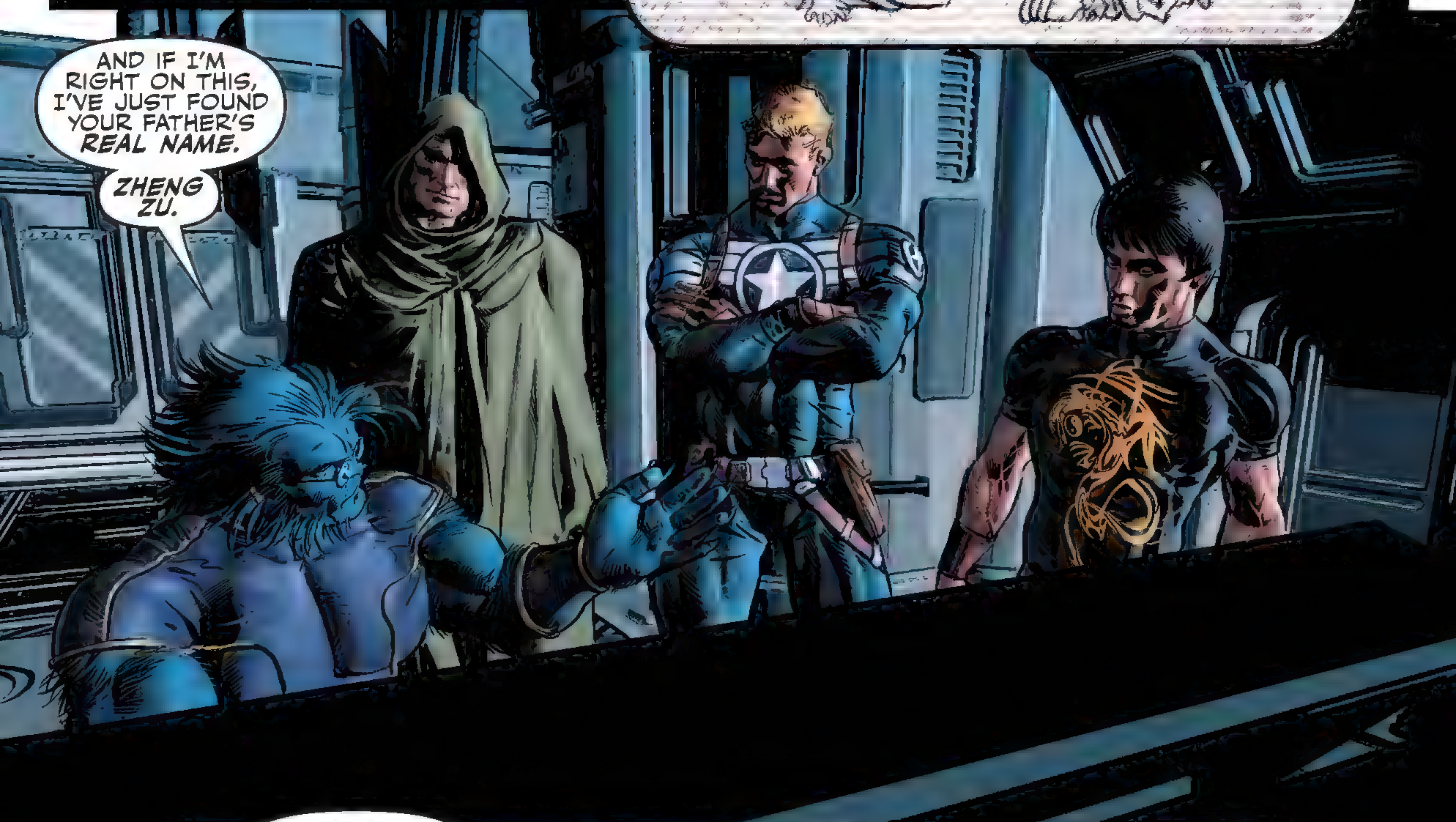
AND THE
FIRST MENTION OF **YOUR**
FATHER IN HISTORICAL
TEXTS...

...TELLS OF
AN **EVIL MAGICIAN**
WHO STEALS HIS BROTHER'S
LIFE ESSENCE SO HE CAN
LIVE FOREVER.



AND IF I'M
RIGHT ON THIS,
I'VE JUST FOUND
YOUR FATHER'S
REAL NAME.

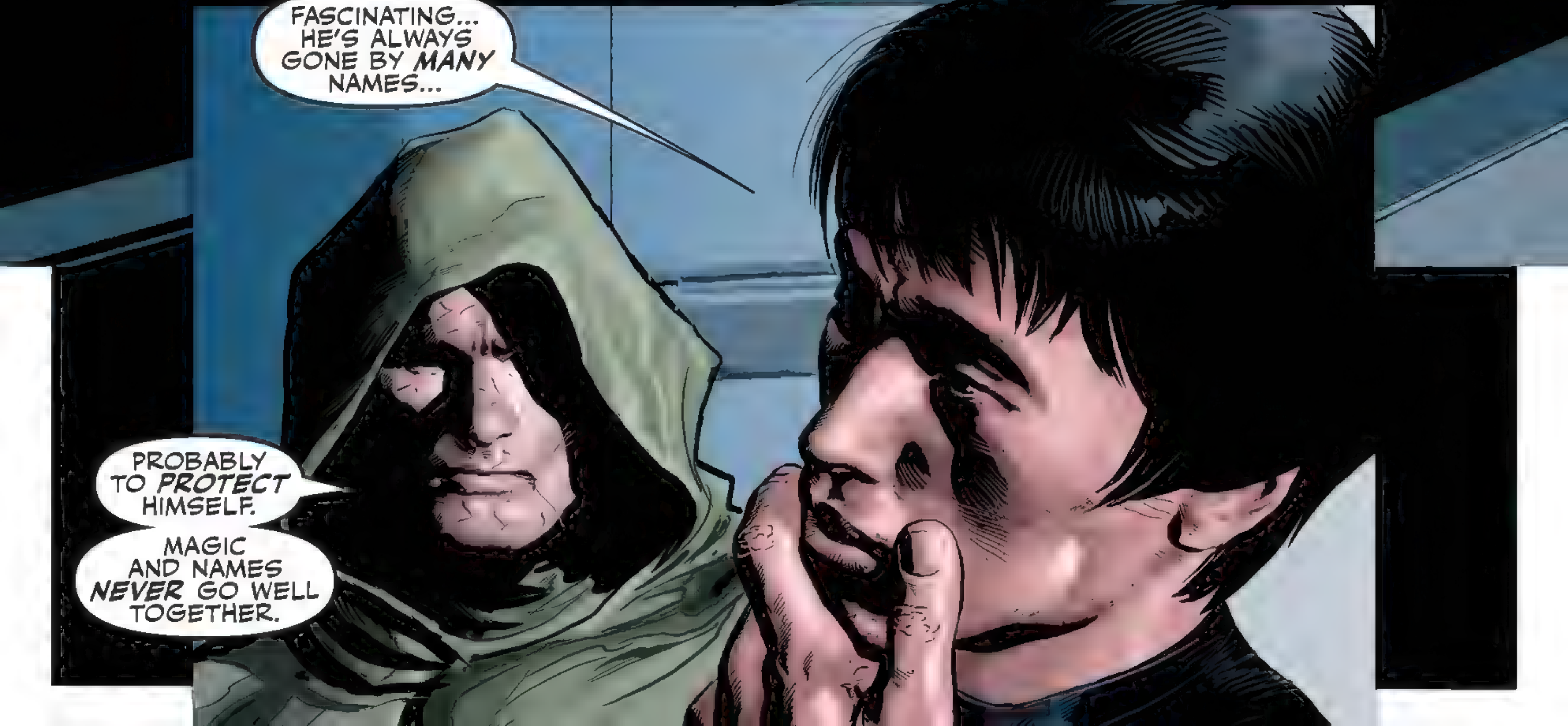
**ZHENG
ZU.**



FASCINATING...
HE'S ALWAYS
GONE BY MANY
NAMES...

PROBABLY
TO **PROTECT**
HIMSELF.

MAGIC
AND NAMES
NEVER GO WELL
TOGETHER.

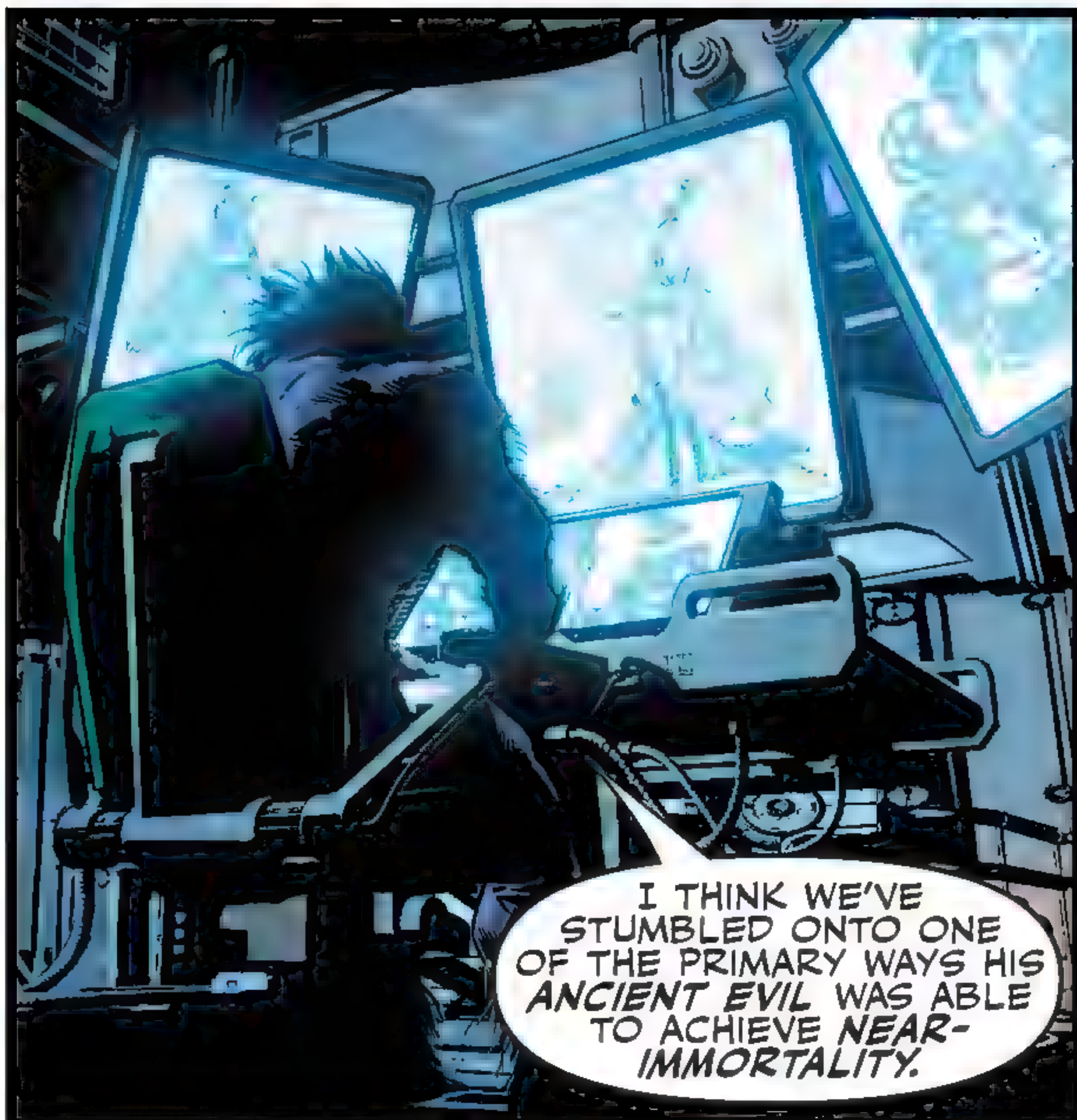




SO, IS *THIS* WHY HE NEEDS SHANG-CHI TO PROPERLY USE THE GEMS?

TO DRAIN THE LIFE FROM *ANOTHER* FAMILY MEMBER?

I BELIEVE SO, YES...



I THINK WE'VE STUMBLERD ONTO ONE OF THE PRIMARY WAYS HIS ANCIENT EVIL WAS ABLE TO ACHIEVE NEAR-IMMORTALITY.



BY KILLING HIS SIBLINGS AND CHILDREN...

WELL, IT WON'T BE THE *FIRST TIME* HE'S TRIED TO USE MY BLOOD FOR HIS GAIN.



BUT WHY ARE OUR FRIENDS WITH THE *SERPENT EMBLEMS* TRYING TO HELP HIM?

WHAT'S *THEIR* AGENDA IN THIS? WHY DO THEY WANT--

HEY. SORRY TO BARGE IN...



...BUT THERE'S SOMETHING HAPPENING IN HONG KONG YOU NEED TO SEE.

DOWNTOWN HONG KONG

"THE EVIL
FREAK IS JUST
ATTACKING
DOWNTOWN
HONG KONG?"



"...IN BROAD
DAYLIGHT?"



"MY FATHER HAS
ALWAYS BEEN A
TERRORIST..."



"...IT'S JUST HIS
METHODS THAT
HAVE CHANGED
THIS TIME."



WE'LL WORRY ABOUT THE WHY LATER... RIGHT NOW, WE SAVE THOSE PEOPLE...

WAR MACHINE, YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO?

YEAH, I GOT THE FOCUSED EMP CHARGE READY.



IT'LL DISABLE ANY VIDEO FEEDS SO WE DON'T GO TOO PUBLIC...

THEN LET'S MOVE, AVENGERS.



ON IT.



<WHAT IS THAT...?>



GYAAHHH--!

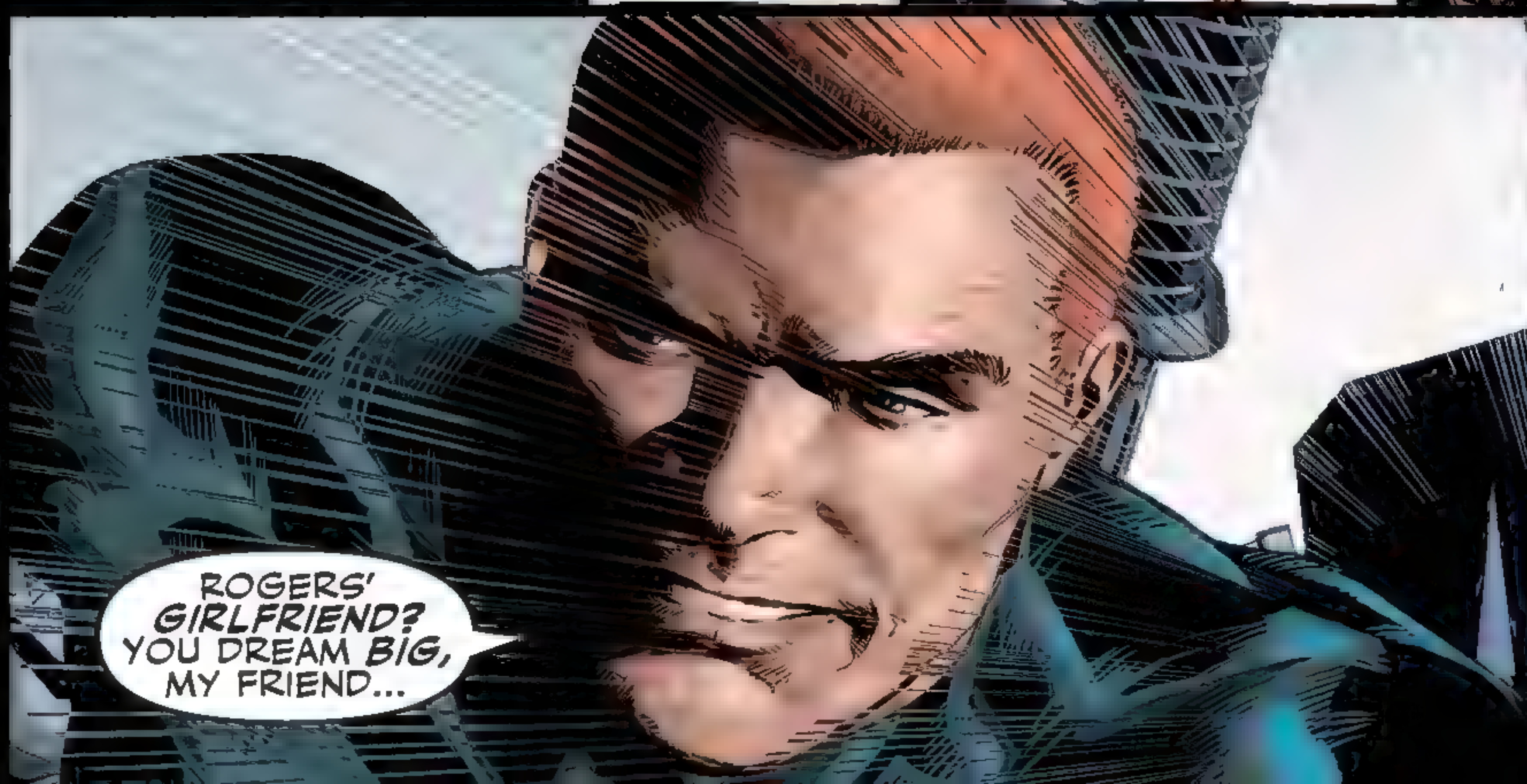
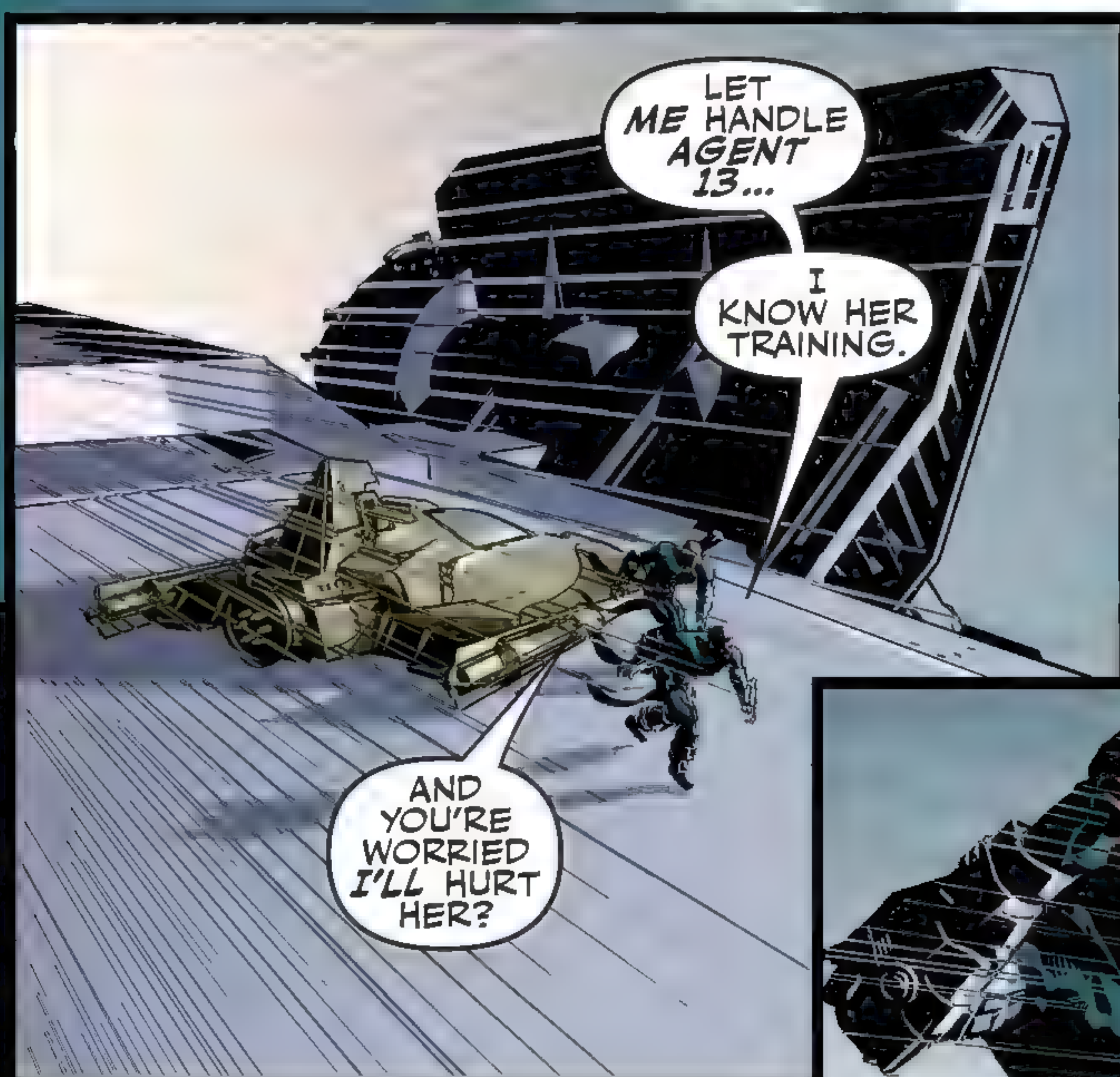
NOW,
PEOPLE! MOVE
FAST!

TAKE
THEM
DOWN!

GUHH--









CRAP. THEY
UPGRADED **SECURITY**
SINCE THE LAST TIME
I WAS HERE...

WE
EXPECTED
THAT.

YOU
CAN STILL
GET **IN**,
RIGHT?

YEAH...BUT
THERE'S **NO** WAY
THEY AIN'T GONNA
KNOW WE'RE
HERE.

REEEEEEET!
INTRUDER ALERT!
INTRUDER ALERT!
REET! REET!

OH...
WHAT THE
HELL?

STEVE!
I'M BEING
BOARDED
UP HERE!

SHARON!
CAN YOU HOLD
THEM OFF?

I DON'T
KNOW.

I DON'T
KNOW HOW
MANY THERE
ARE YET!

GYAA--!

THE
QUINJET!

WAR
MACHINE--
STOP
HIM!

FOR
THE MASTER'S
GLORY!!



VZAAAM

GUUHH--!

DEET

DEET

DEET

NNOOOOO!



WATCH
OUT!

UHHN!

SHARON?!
DO YOU
COPY?

ENOUGH,
FATHER!

YOU WANT
MY *BLOOD*?
THEN COME
AND--





"...THEY WERE
JUST TRYING
TO DRAW US TO
WITHIN *ARM'S*
REACH!"

UHHN!

I KNOW
WHAT YOU
ARE--

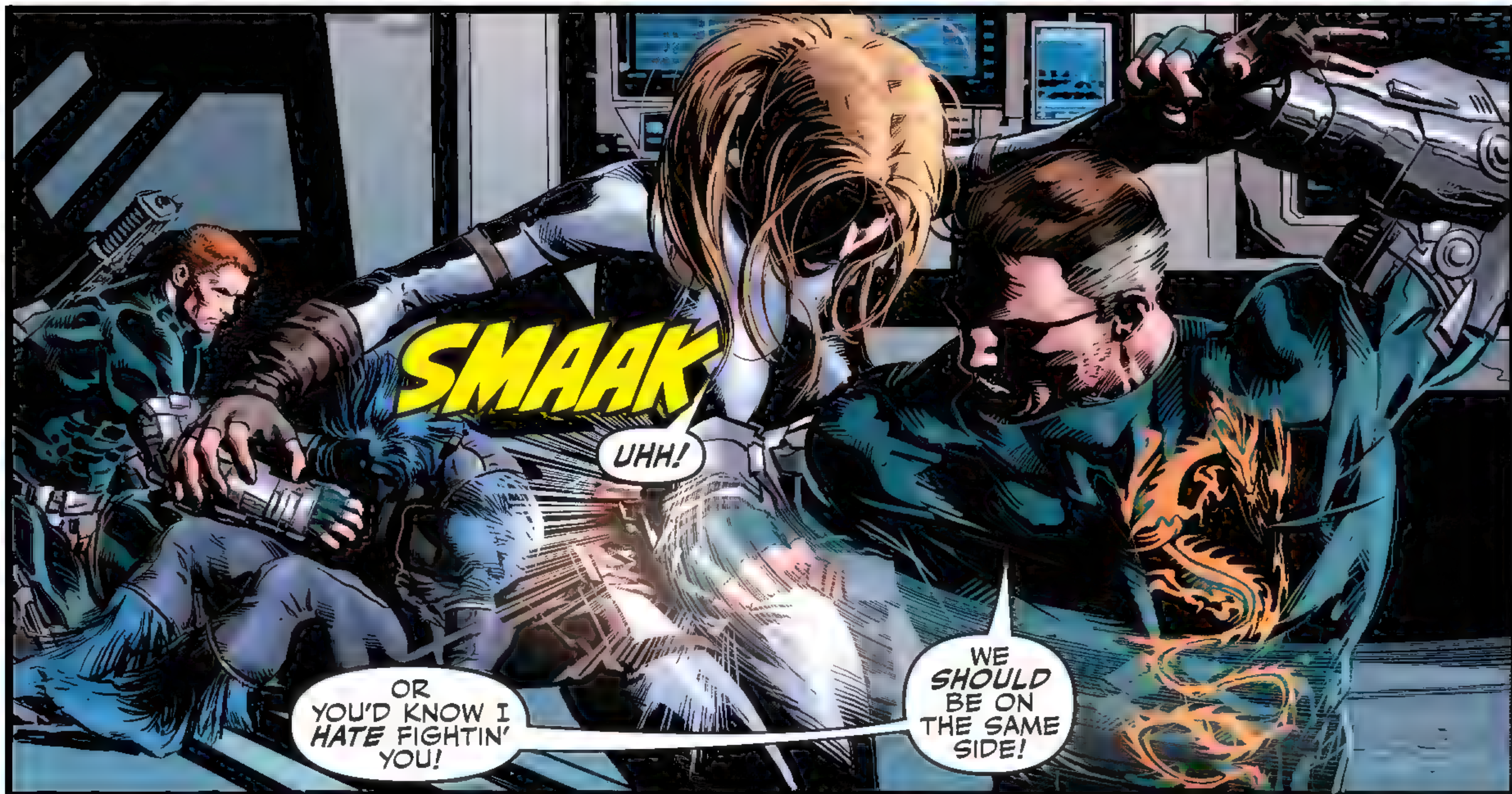
--AND I'M
SURE AS HELL
NOT LETTING SOME
NICK FURY WANNABE
GET THE--

KA-RAAK

YOU DON'T KNOW
ANYTHIN' ABOUT
ME, DOLL.

--BET
UHHTE

WOK





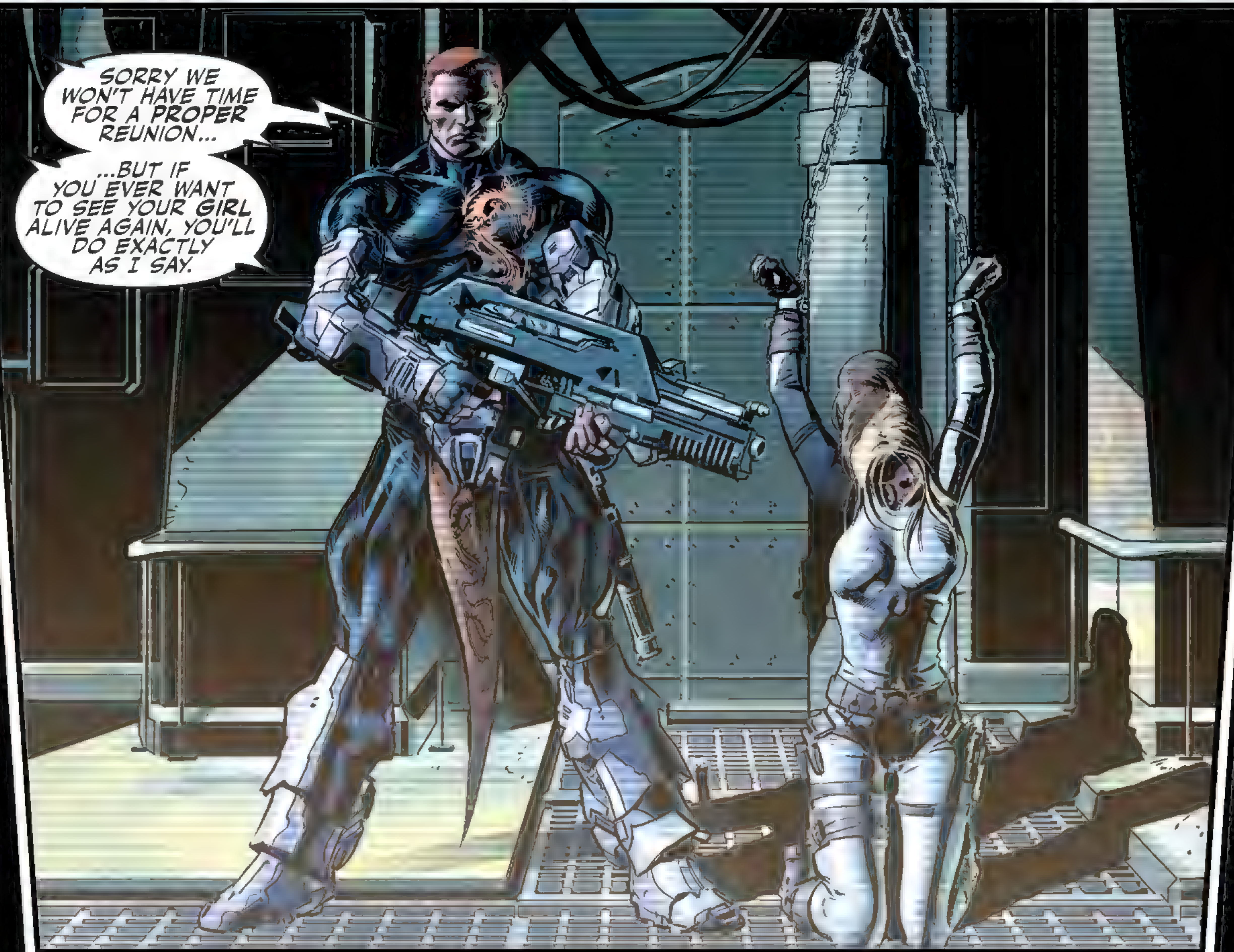




...HIM...



HELLO,
ROGERS...
LONG TIME
NO SEE...



SORRY WE
WON'T HAVE TIME
FOR A PROPER
REUNION...

...BUT IF
YOU EVER WANT
TO SEE YOUR GIRL
ALIVE AGAIN, YOU'LL
DO EXACTLY
AS I SAY.



NO...

JOHN
STEELE...?

GOOD,
YOU REMEMBER
ME. THEN YOU
KNOW I'M
SERIOUS.



WHO THE HELL IS JOHN STEELE?

WHAT?



OH... DAMN.

--A SIMPLE EXCHANGE... AGENT 13 FOR SHANG-CHI.



STEELE!
IF YOU HURT HER,
I SWEAR I WILL
KILL YOU!

I WILL
FIND A WAY
AND I WILL KILL
YOU!



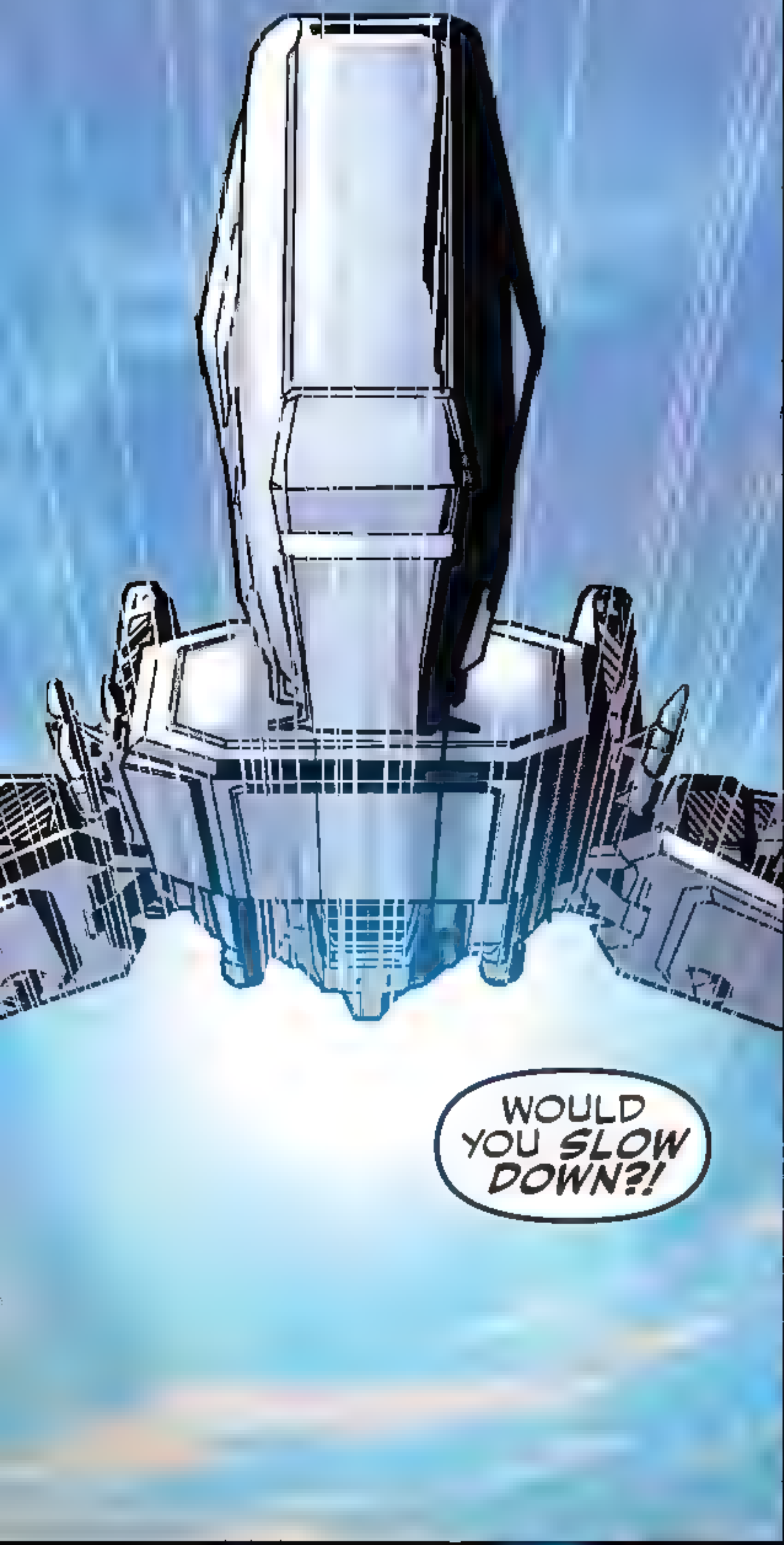
NO NEED TO GET DRAMATIC, ROGERS... SEE?

THE GIRL WILL BE FINE...



...AT LEAST, UNTIL TOMORROW.





WOULD
YOU SLOW
DOWN?!



NO.
HE'S GOT HER...
DAMN IT...

YES, BUT
WHO IS HE,
STEVE?

WHO IN THE
HELL IS JOHN
STEELE?



HE WAS A...
BROTHER-IN-ARMS,
I GUESS...

...NOT
EXACTLY A
FRIEND.

JOHN AMAN AND I
BOTH KNEW HIM, BACK
DURING THE WAR.

AND THERE
WAS SOMETHING
TROUBLED ABOUT
HIM THEN TOO.

LIKE HE
DIDN'T KNOW WHAT
HE WAS FIGHTING FOR...
JUST FIGHTING.



I THINK FIGHTING WAS NEARLY ALL HE REMEMBERED OF HIS LIFE BEFORE THEN.

WE KNOW HE WAS IN WORLD WAR ONE, AND IT WAS SPECULATED HE'D SEEN COMBAT IN THE CIVIL WAR TOO.

"HOW HE'S BEEN ABLE TO LIVE SO LONG AND WHERE HE GOT HIS POWERS..."

"...ARE QUESTIONS THAT REMAIN UNANSWERED."

"BUT WE KNOW JOHN STEELE WAS A *SUPER-SOLDIER* LONG BEFORE I WAS WEARING STARS AND STRIPES."



"AND HE *TRULY* WAS SOMETHING TO BEHOLD.

"I ONLY SAW HIM IN ACTION A FEW TIMES, BUT...

"...HE WAS *SO MUCH* STRONGER THAN ME.

"HE DIDN'T HAVE MY TRAINING... BUT HE DIDN'T *NEED* IT.

"HE WAS *NEARLY* INDESTRUCTIBLE.

"WE NEVER FOUND OUT HOW THE GERMANS *CAPTURED* HIM DURING THE FIRST WAR...BUT WE KNOW THEIR SCIENTISTS STUDIED HIM FOR *DECADES*...

"TRYING TO LEARN HIS SECRETS TO CREATE THEIR *MASTER RACE*...

"ONE OF THOSE GERMAN SCIENTISTS WAS *PROFESSOR ERSKINE* WHO CREATED THE *SUPER-SOLDIER SERUM*."

"ANOTHER WAS THE *FATHER* OF THE MAN WHOSE EXPERIMENTS TURNED LUKE CAGE INTO *POWER MAN*."

AND UNTIL TODAY, NO ONE HAD *SEEN* JOHN STEELE SINCE 1943.

THEN I GUESS THAT BRINGS US TO THE *PRIMARY* QUESTION, STEVE...

WHICH IS... DIDN'T THIS JOHN STEELE *USED* TO BE ONE OF THE *GOOD* GUYS?



GOOD...

...YOU'RE
EATIN'. I WAS
WORRIED YOU'D
TRY A HUNGER
STRIKE...

I NEED MY
STRENGTH FOR
WHEN I ESCAPE
AND BEAT THE
CRAP OUT OF
YOU.

I
KNOW...BUT I
REMEMBER YOU
LIKE WE WERE
GOOD FRIENDS
ONCE UPON
A TIME.

THANKS TO
HAVIN' A LIFETIME
OF NICK FURY'S
MEMORIES.

IT'S MAX,
RIGHT? ISN'T
THAT WHAT YOUR
PARTNER CALLED
YOU?

YEAH.

WELL, LET
ME TELL YOU
SOMETHING,
FRIEND...

GOOD TO
SEE YOU AGAIN,
AGENT 13.

YOU'VE
NEVER MET
ME.

...THERE'S A **BIG DIFFERENCE** BETWEEN YOU AND NICK FURY.

FOR ONE THING, NICK FURY WOULDN'T **KIDNAP** HIS FRIENDS.

GOD, EVEN YOU DON'T BELIEVE THAT.

NICK WOULD KIDNAP THE WHOLE DAMN **AVENGERS** AN' SEND 'EM BACK IN TIME IF HE THOUGHT IT WAS THE **RIGHT THING** TO DO.

SO THAT'S IT, THEN...YOU THINK YOU'RE WORKING FOR THE **RIGHT SIDE**?

I **KNOW** I AM.

AND THE **RIGHT SIDE** STANDS AGAINST STEVE ROGERS AND THE **AVENGERS** AND EVERYTHING ELSE WE KNOW?

THE **SHADOW COUNCIL** LOOKS AT A **BIGGER PICTURE**...

ROGERS AN' THEM? THEY'RE STILL STUCK IN THE **DETAILS**.



THE
DETAILS?
WHAT,
YOU MEAN
HUMANITY?



IS THAT
S'POSED TO
HURT?

I'M MADE
FROM NICK FURY,
REMEMBER?

I DON'T
HAVE ANY PRIDE
TO WOUND.



BUT I'M TELLIN'
YOU *STRAIGHT*, SHARON...
OUR SIDE COULD REALLY
USE YOU.

AN' I
THINK YOU'D FIT
RIGHT IN.

I'LL
PASS.



JUST...
THINK ABOUT
IT.

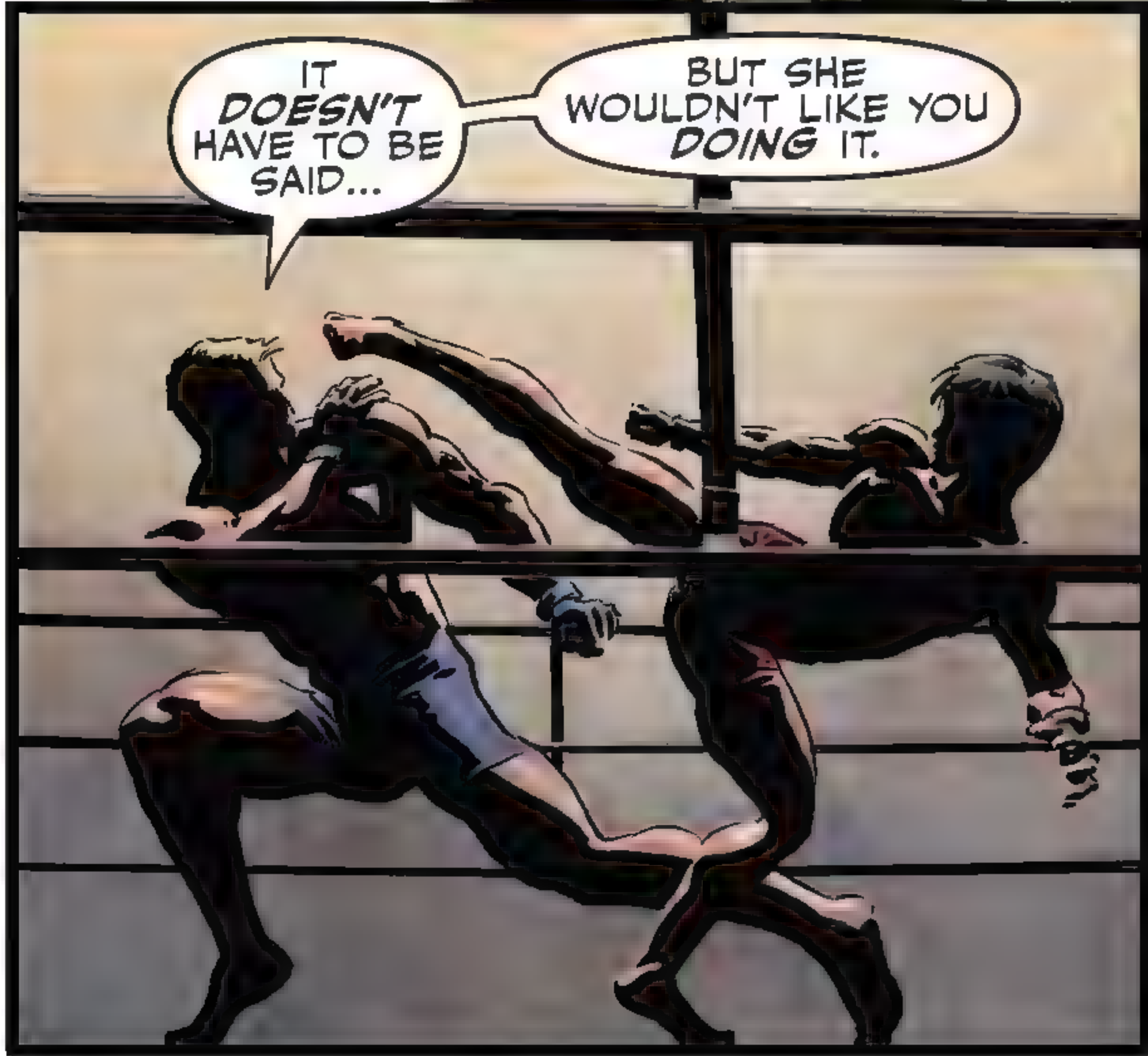


YOU
KNOW STEVE'S
GONNA *RUIN* ALL
YOUR PLANS,
RIGHT?



IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE SAID, DOES IT?

THAT I WILL TURN MYSELF OVER SO THEY'LL FREE YOUR WOMAN?

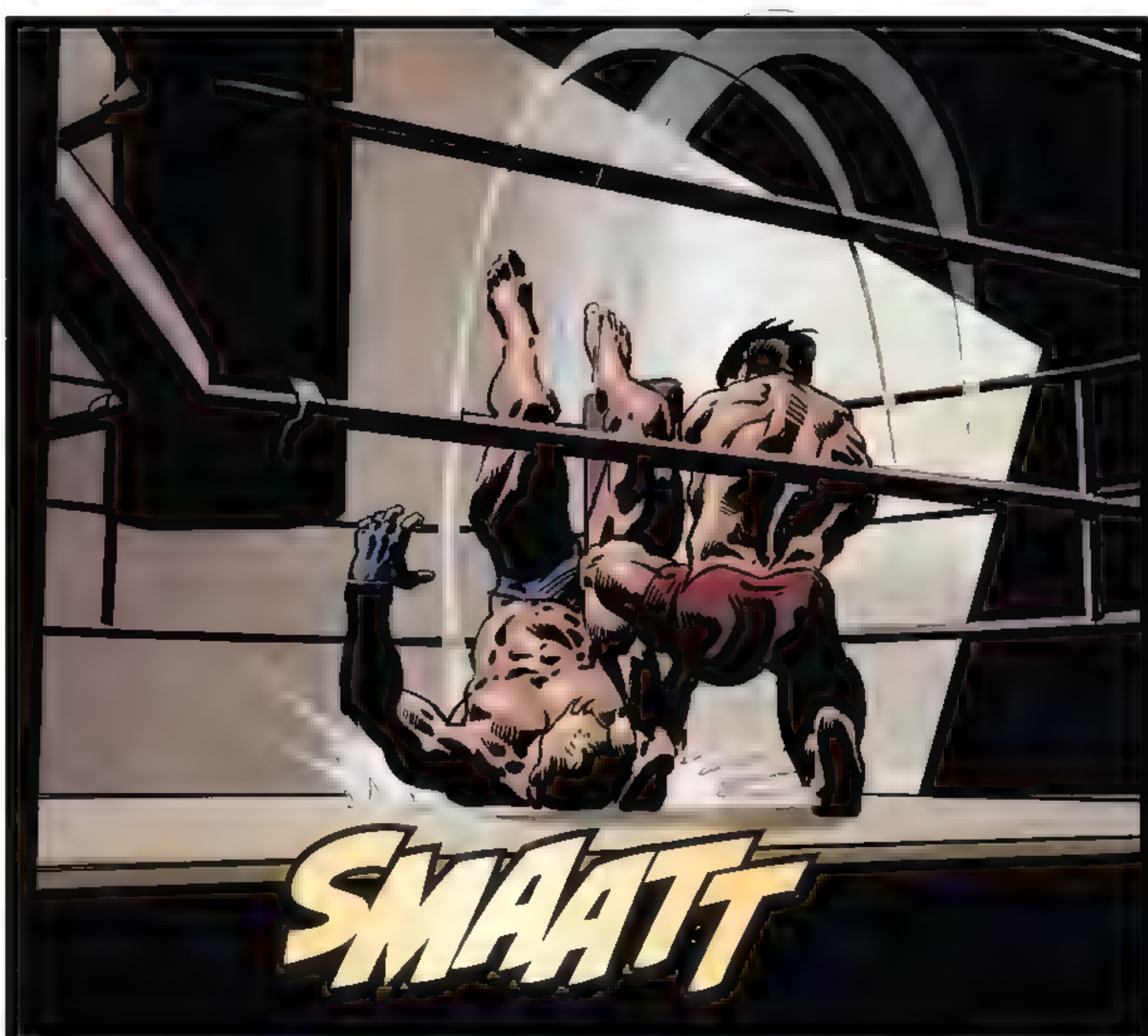


IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE SAID...

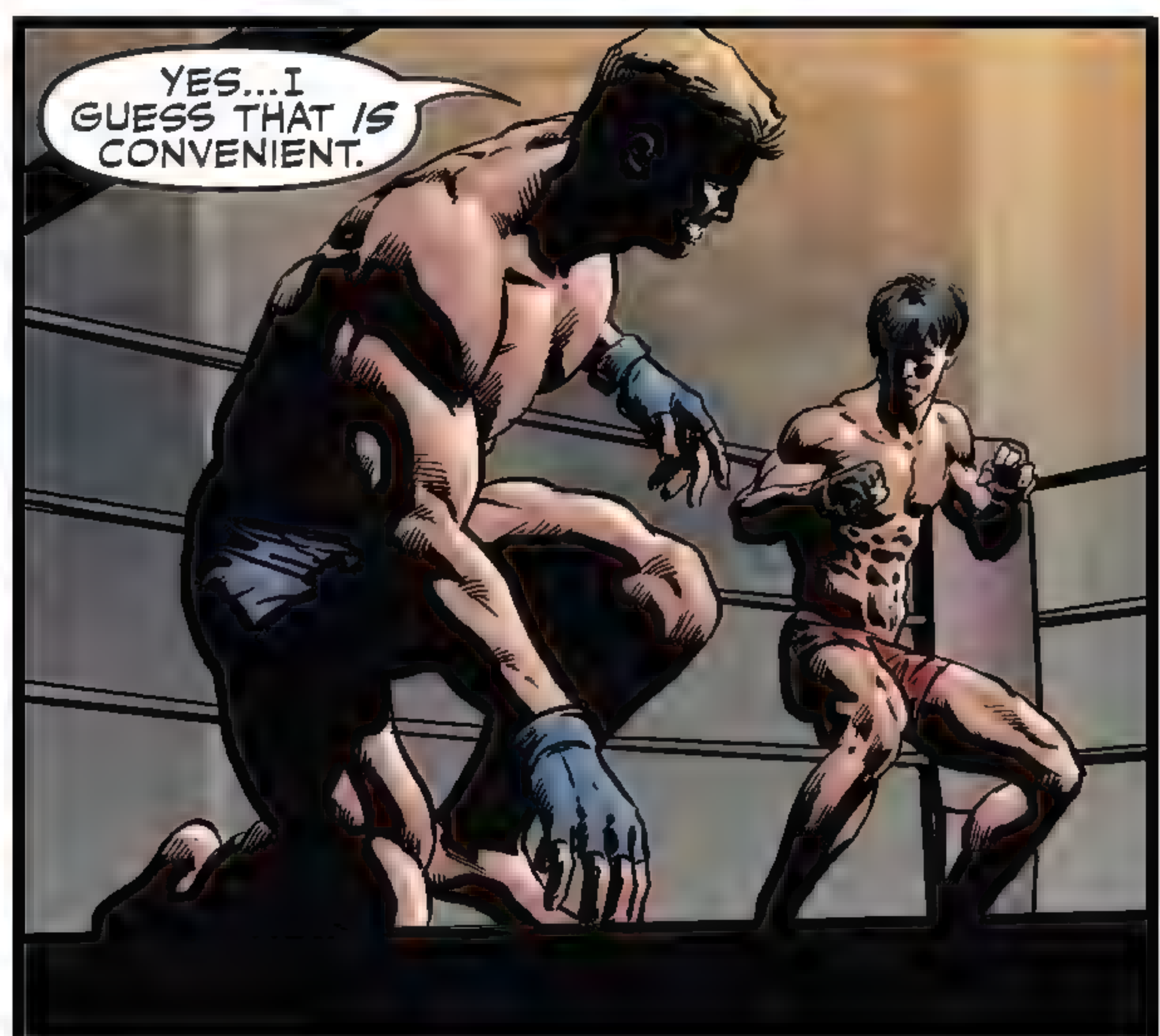
BUT SHE WOULDN'T LIKE YOU DOING IT.



THEN IT'S CONVENIENT THAT SHE IS NOT HERE TO ARGUE WITH ME.



SMAATT



YES...I GUESS THAT IS CONVENIENT.



WHY
DO YOU THINK
THESE PEOPLE WANT
YOUR FATHER BACK
AMONG THE LIVING,
SHANG-CHI?

THERE
ARE TOO MANY
POSSIBILITIES...

FOR HIS
POWER AND
CRUELTY...

FOR HIS
FOLLOWERS'
DEVOTION...

MANY
WITHIN CHINA'S
GOVERNMENT
STILL SECRETLY
WORSHIP--

KRAAK

UHHN!

STILL...
WHATEVER
THEIR
REASONS... WE
CAN'T LET IT
HAPPEN.

AT LEAST
WE'RE AGREED
ON THAT.

STEVE, THE
INSTRUCTIONS
JUST CAME
THROUGH.

WE'LL BE
RIGHT THERE,
HANK.

THE
ROOFTOP
OF ONE OF THE
TALLEST BUILDINGS
IN HONG KONG AT
MIDNIGHT
TONIGHT?

I DON'T
LIKE THIS
AT ALL.

I WASN'T
EXPECTING ANY
OF US WOULD
LIKE IT.

AND ONLY YOU
AND SHANG-CHI ARE
ALLOWED AT THIS
HAND-OFF...

BUT YOU
CAN BET STEELE WILL
BE BRINGING A WHOLE
REGIMENT OF HIS
PEOPLE.

I'VE GOT
A FEELING
THIS IS MORE
PERSONAL
FOR HIM.

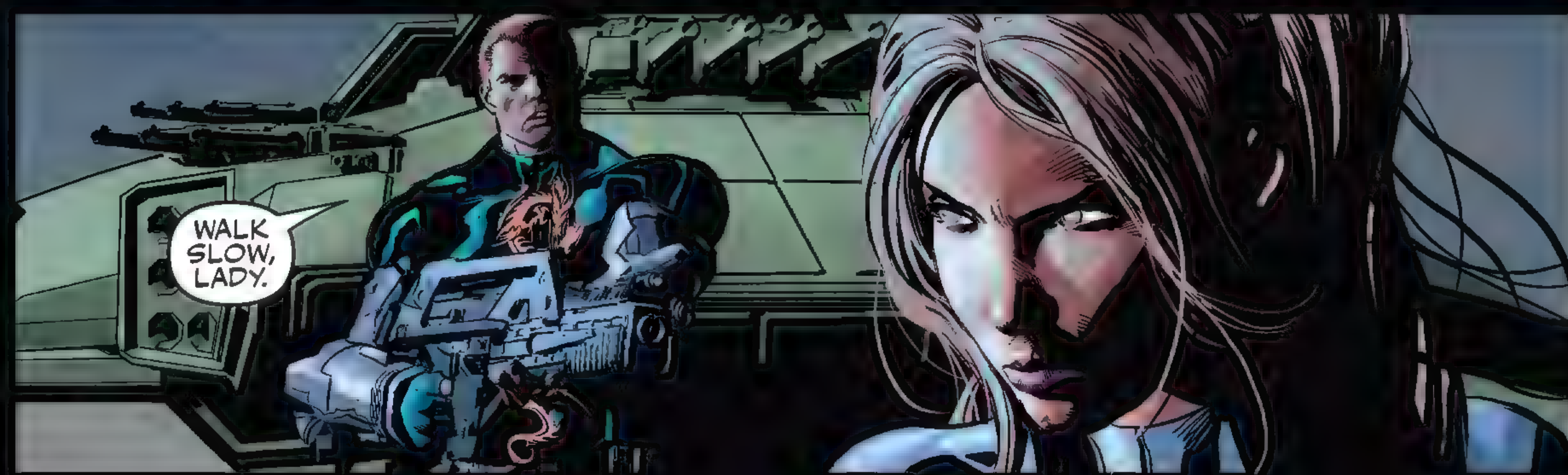
THAT HE
WANTS TO
TAKE ME ON,
MAN-TO-
MAN.

OH...
AND YOU
PLAN TO
OBLIGE
HIM?

AS SOON
AS I'M SURE
SHARON'S
SAFE... YES.

NOW, CAN
YOU BRING UP A
3-D MAP OF THIS
LOCATION?

I THINK
I SPOTTED
SOME-
THING...







I'VE GOT THIS.

JOHN STEELE'S JUST AS FAST AS HE USED TO BE BUT SO AM I.

KNNK

...AND HE'S LOST A FEW MOVES FOR SOME REASON.

STILL

KA-WAAAM

TOO FAST



YOU
WANTED
THIS, DIDN'T
YOU?

WANTED
TO KNOW IF YOU
COULD **BEAT ME**
SINCE WAY BACK
WHEN...

TALK
MORE THAN
YOU USED
TO...



...A **BAD**
HABIT TO
PICK UP!

UHN!

KRAAK



HAVEN'T BEEN HIT
THAT HARD IN A
LONG TIME...AND
STEELE KNOWS IT.



CAN'T LET HIM
LAND. MANY
MORE LIKE THAT.

HAVE TO KEEP HIM
ON THE ROPES

KNNCH

HE'S
STRONGER
FASTER

BUT I'M BETTER
TRAINED... MORE
EXPERIENCED...

I CAN--

ENOUGH
OF THIS
\$#@%!

SMACK

AHHHH!



WAY TOO FAST

WHAAM

YOU GAVE
IT THE OLD
COLLEGE TRY,
ROGERS...

...BUT YOU
CAN'T TAKE
ME.

YOU
NEVER COULD
HAVE.

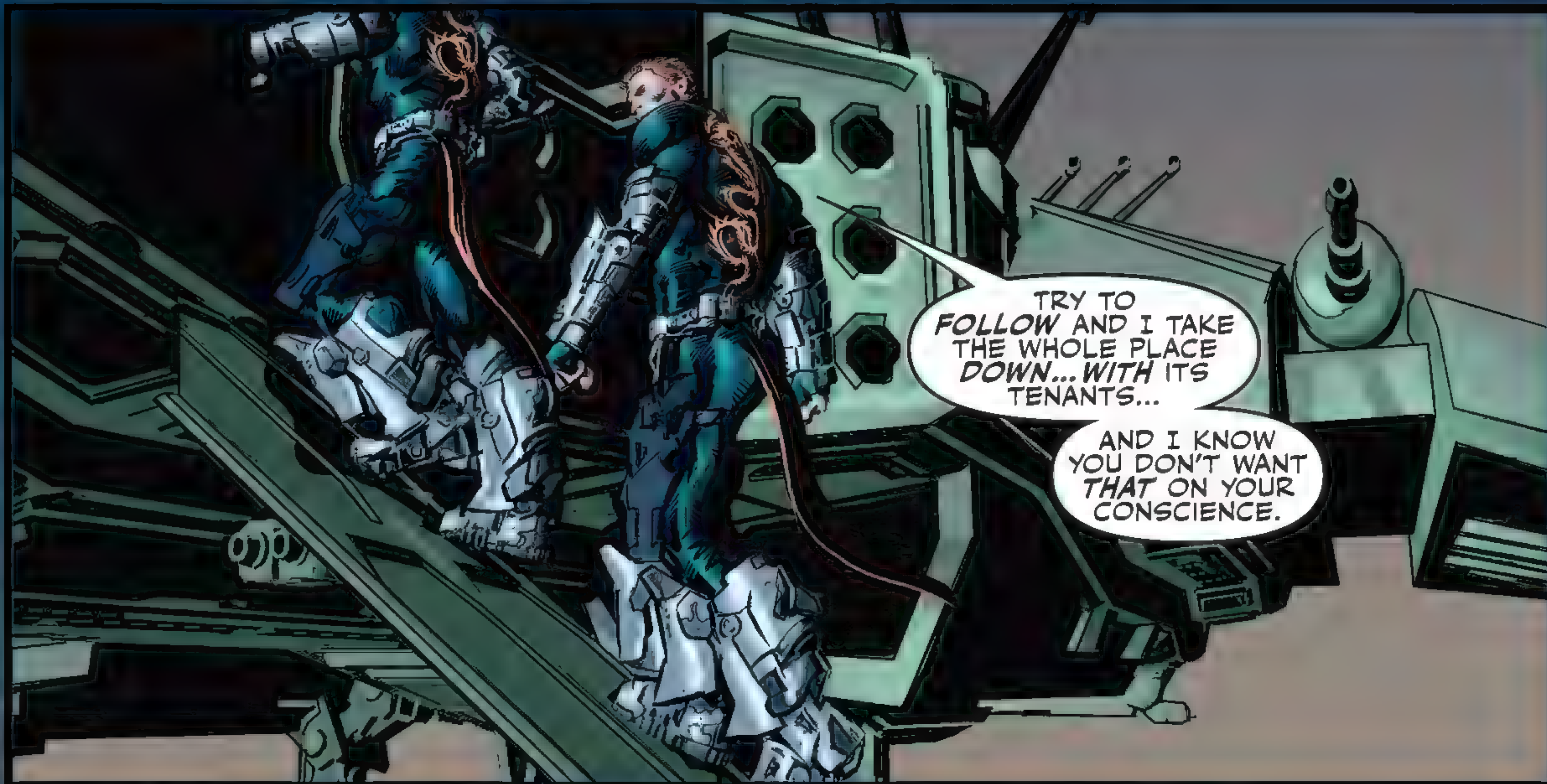
...THEN...
IT'S A...GOOD
THING...

...I CHEATED...

WHAT?







TRY TO
FOLLOW AND I TAKE
THE WHOLE PLACE
DOWN... WITH ITS
TENANTS...

AND I KNOW
YOU DON'T WANT
THAT ON YOUR
CONSCIENCE.



PLEASE TELL ME
THAT WAS PART OF THE
PLAN, AND YOU JUST LET
STEELE BEAT YOU ON
PURPOSE...

NO SUCH
LUCK...



...BUT
THIS *ISN'T*
OVER.



HOURS LATER

DID
THEY HAVE TO
BEAT YOU INTO
SUBMISSION,
MY SON?



I WOULD'VE
THOUGHT YOU'D
VOLUNTEER TO
SACRIFICE YOURSELF
IN PLACE OF THE
WOMAN...

I DID.
THEY
BEAT ME
ON YOUR
ORDERS.



OH...
RIGHT.

MY MIND
ISN'T... WHAT
IT SOON WILL
BE...



I
WOULDN'T
COUNT ON
THAT.

I
WON'T GO
SO EASILY
AS YOUR
BROTHER
DID...



...ZHENG ZU.



HMMPH...
YOU THINK
THAT NAME HAS
ANY POWER
OVER ME?

AFTER ALL
THESE YEARS...
ALL THESE
LIVES?



NO,
YOU'LL
BLEED OUT
TOMORROW
NIGHT,
BOY...

...LIKE SO
MANY OF YOUR
SIBLINGS AND
MINE BEFORE
YOU...





WE'VE
GONE TO A LOT
OF **EFFORT** HERE,
DIRECTOR
THORNDRAKE.

MY
QUESTION, IS
THE OLD BASTARD
WORTH IT?

I
WASN'T AWARE
WE PAID YOU
TO **QUESTION**
US, JOHN.

I
WASN'T
AWARE YOU
PAID ME
AT ALL.

I MEANT
IT AS A
FIGURE OF
SPEECH.

WE **BOTH**
KNOW MONEY
IS ONE OF THE
GREAT LIES.

STILL,
YOU HAVE A
POINT.

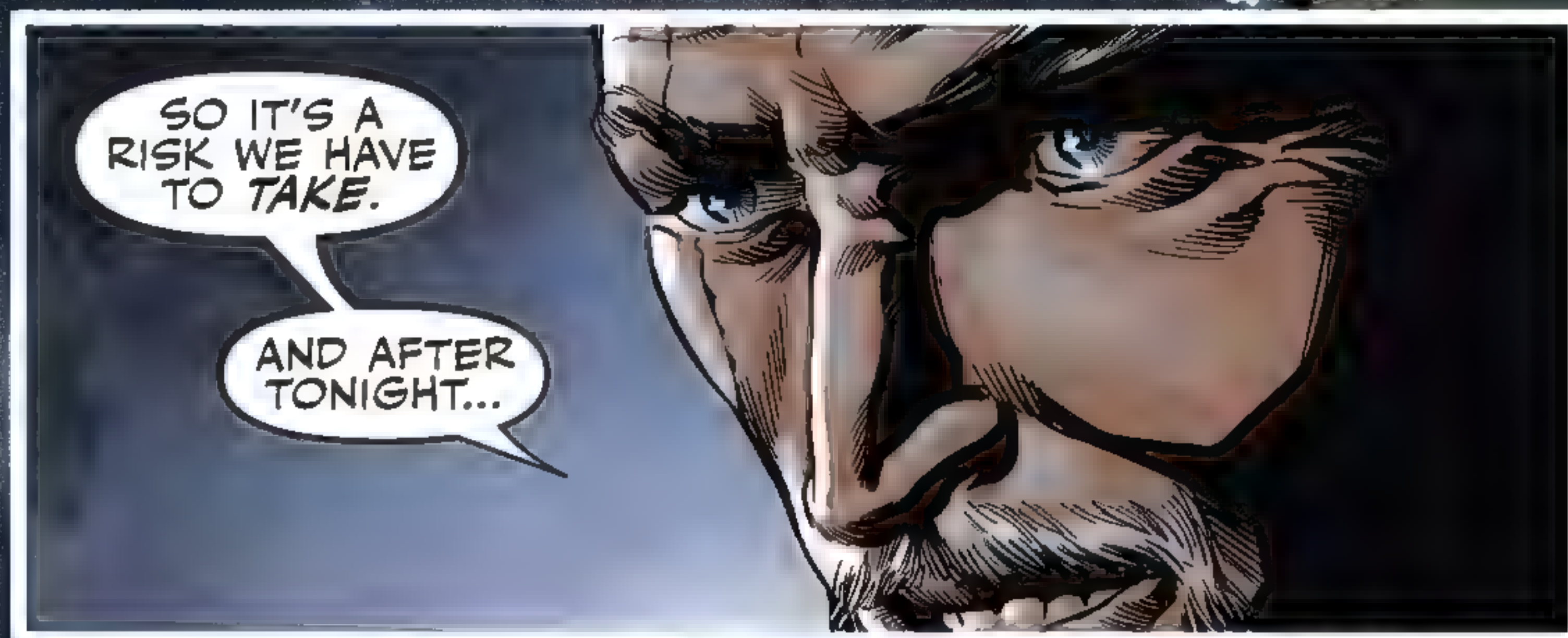
ZHENG ZU
WILL BE HARD TO
CONTROL...

...WHICH
IS WHY WE
AVOIDED
HIM IN THE
PAST.



BUT
THE WORLD'S
CHANGING **FAST**...
AND CHINA IS AT
THE **FOREFRONT**
OF THAT
CHANGE.

WE NEED
SOMEONE **INSIDE**...
PULLING SOME
STRINGS.



SO IT'S A
RISK WE HAVE
TO **TAKE**.

AND AFTER
TONIGHT...



...THE
OLD BASTARD
WILL OWE US
MORE THAN HE
CAN **EVER**
REPAY.



CAN YOU
FEEL IT,
MY SON?

CAN
YOU FEEL THE
LAST MOMENTS
OF YOUR LIFE
BEGINNING?



I FEEL
NOTHING BUT
PITY...

I NEVER
REALIZED WHAT
A SCARED LITTLE
MAN YOU MUST
TRULY BE.



SAVE
YOUR PITY FOR
YOURSELF...

YOU'LL
GET NONE
FROM ME.

KUUFF



GIVE ME THE EYES.

IS IT TIME, THEN?

OH YES...



TIME TO BE RID OF THIS FRAGILE JOKE OF A BODY...



TIME TO BE RESTORED.

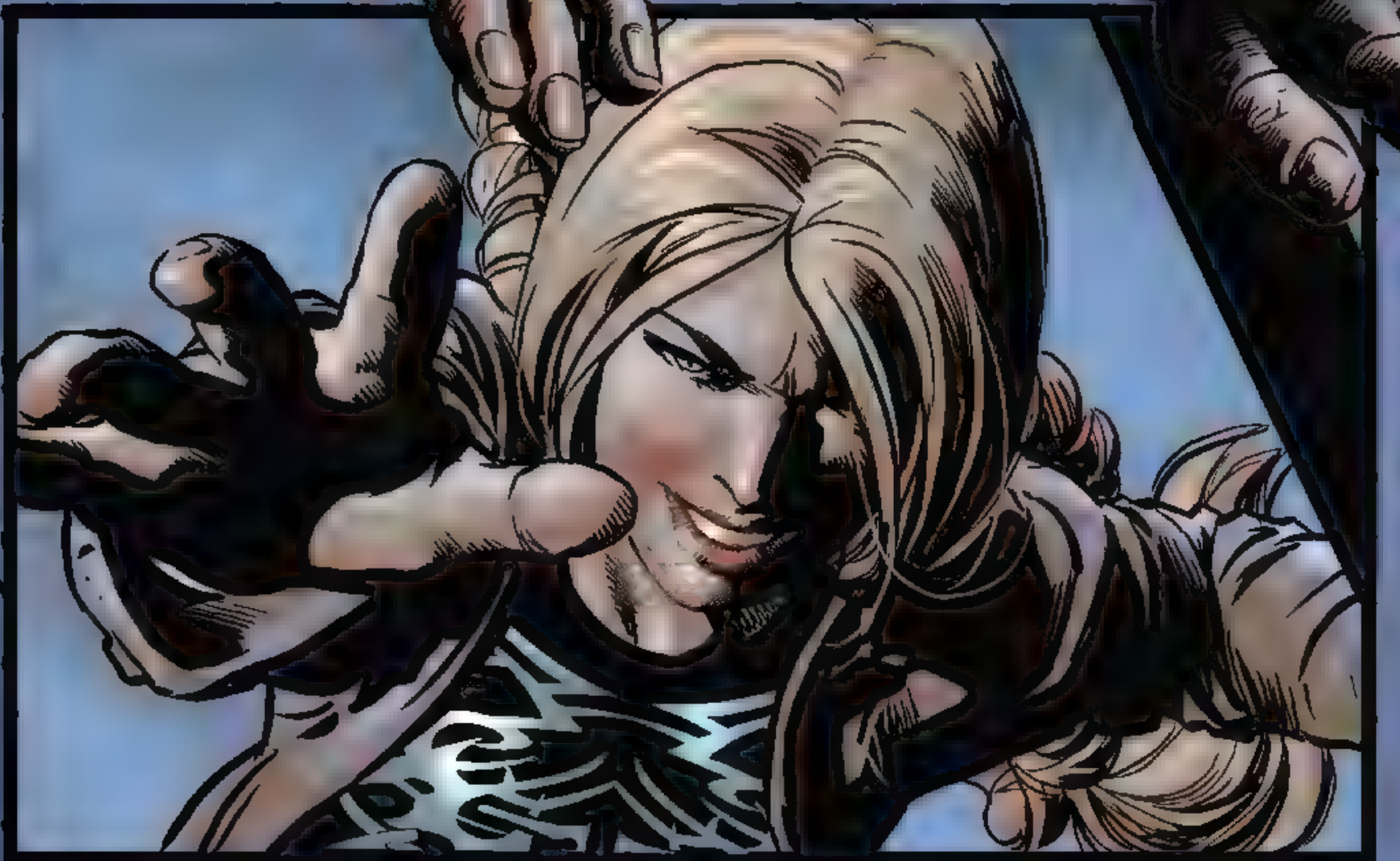


OKAY. MOON KNIGHT JUST SENT THE SIGNAL.

SHANG CHI'S FATHER AND THE SHADOW COUNCIL LEADER ARE BOTH AT THE LOCATION.

YOU ALL
KNOW WHAT
TO DO!

**LET'S GO,
AVENGERS!**



"HEY--"

--WHAT
THE HELL'D
YOU JUST
DO?

NOTHING,
SIR.

DON'T
GIMME THAT \$#@%...
I SAW YOU.

NOW
ANSWER
THE--

WHAAM

--GUHH!

WE
GOT A
SPY! STOP
HIM!

BZAAAA





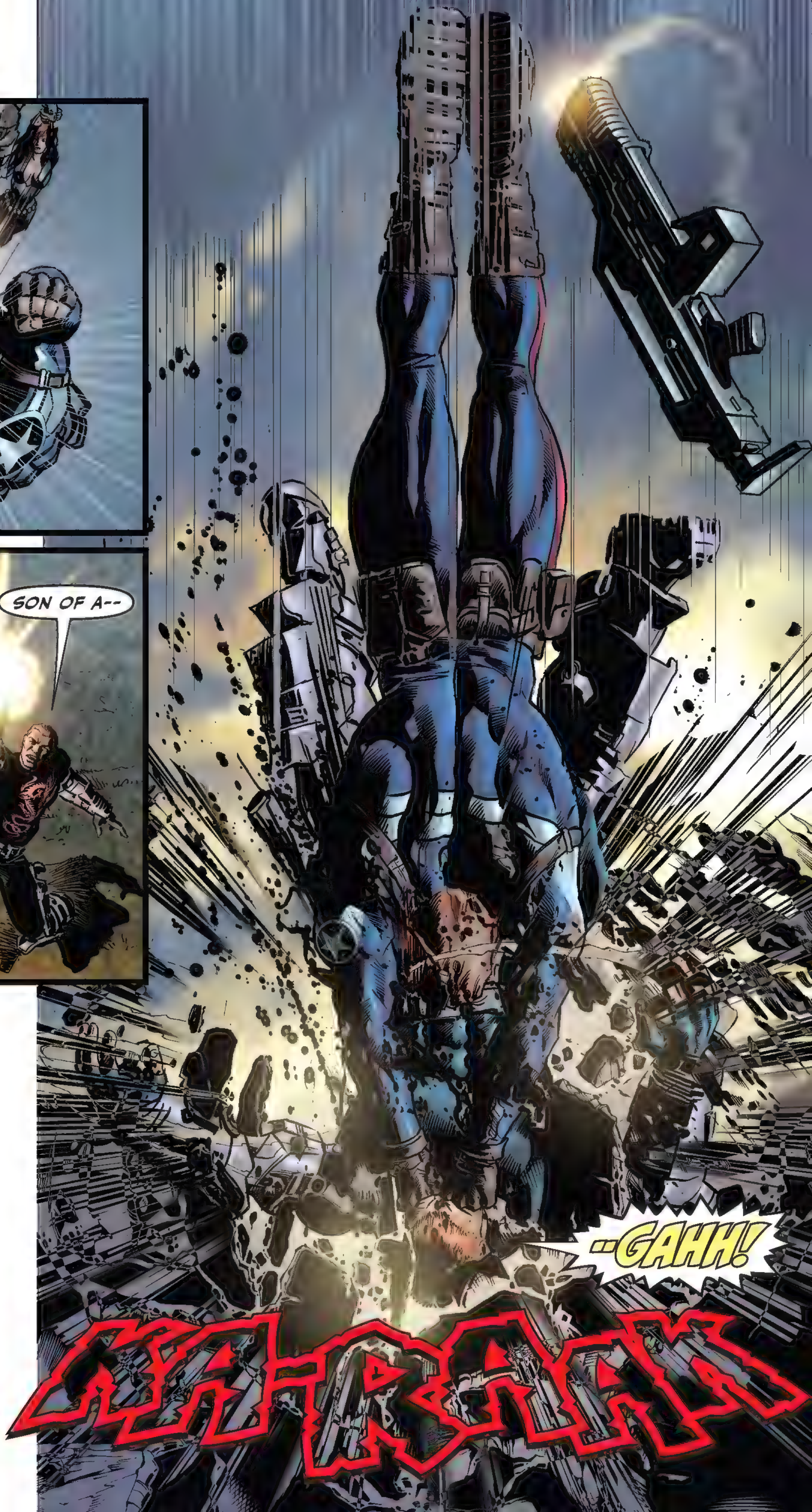
...THEY'LL
BE EXPECTING
YOU.

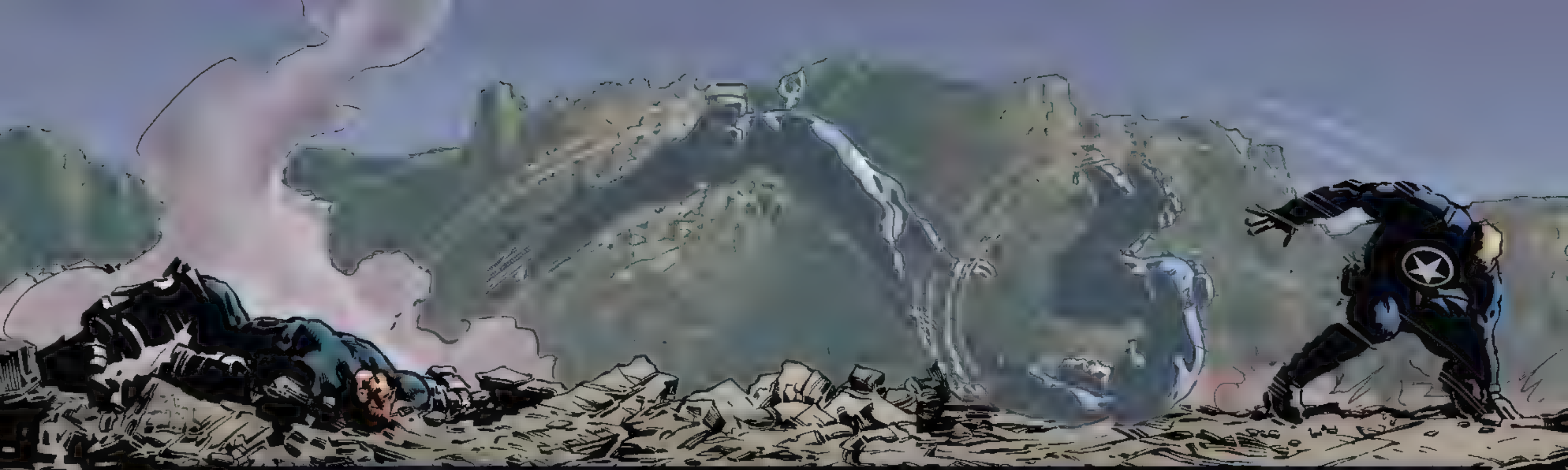
FINE
BY ME.

DROP
ME IN
TWO.

ROGER
THAT.

COULD
THEY...?









BE ON YOUR WAY,
COMMANDER!

I HAVE
THIS ONE!

GUUHH--

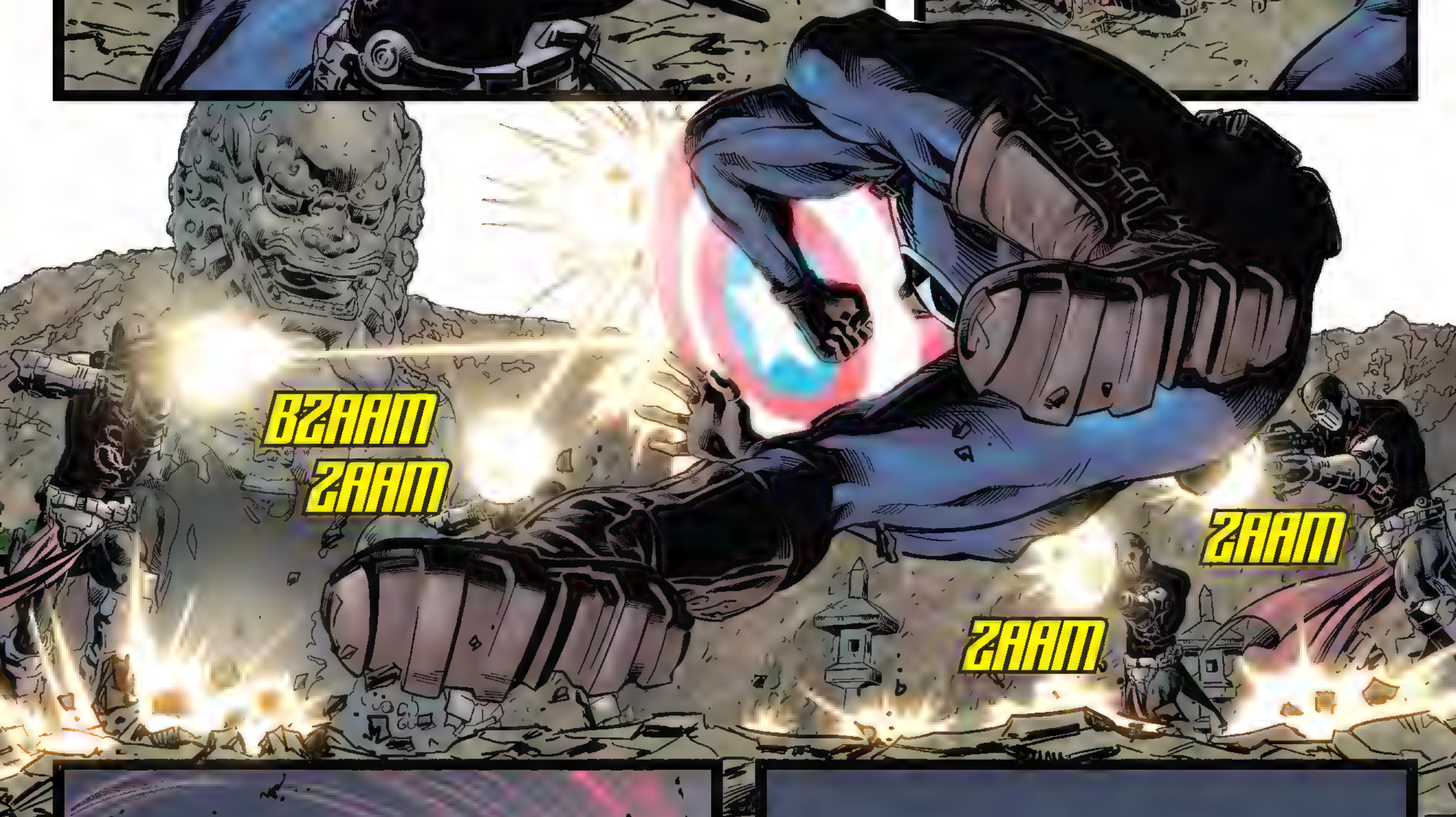
KA-WAAAM

NEED A
TWENTY ON
ROGERS, AND
I MEAN--

KRAKK

--NNHH!





IT'S
TIME TO CUT
OUR **LOSSES**,
DIRECTOR.

QUIET, MAX...
THE OLD MAN'S ABOUT
TO **COMPLETE** HIS
RESURRECTION.

NO,
SIR...

...I DON'T
THINK HE
IS.

ਅਮਰਜੀਤ

...WHAT...?

NOOOO!

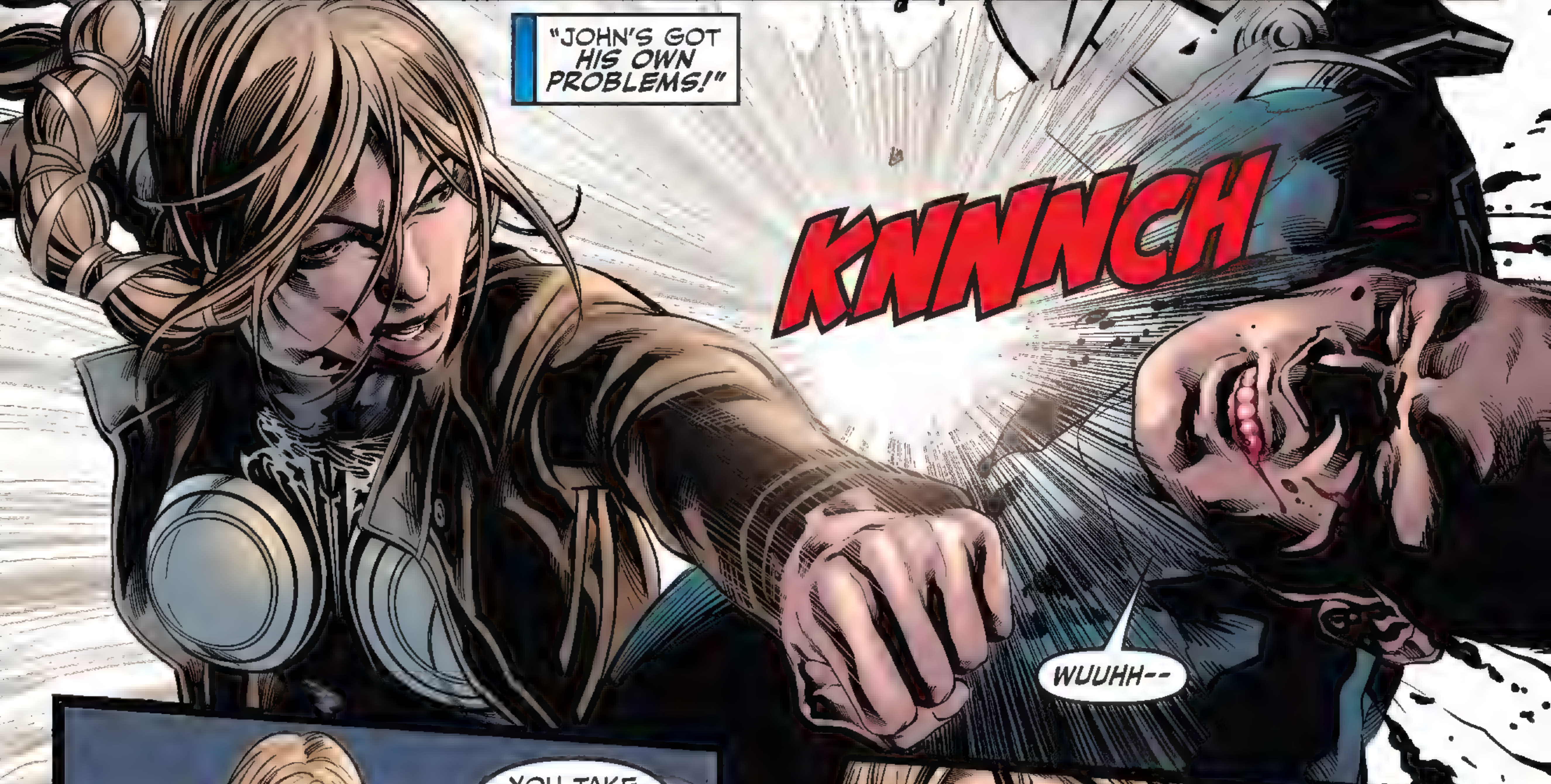


NOW
GO BACK TO
WHATEVER **HELL**
YOU SPRANG
FROM...



C'MON!
THIS WHOLE
TEMPLE WAS
CONNECTED
TO THOSE
STONES!

AND
IT'S FALLING
APART JUST LIKE
ZHENG ZU
DID!





AAAAH!

WE DON'T
HAVE TIME
TO PLAY,
VALKYRIE!

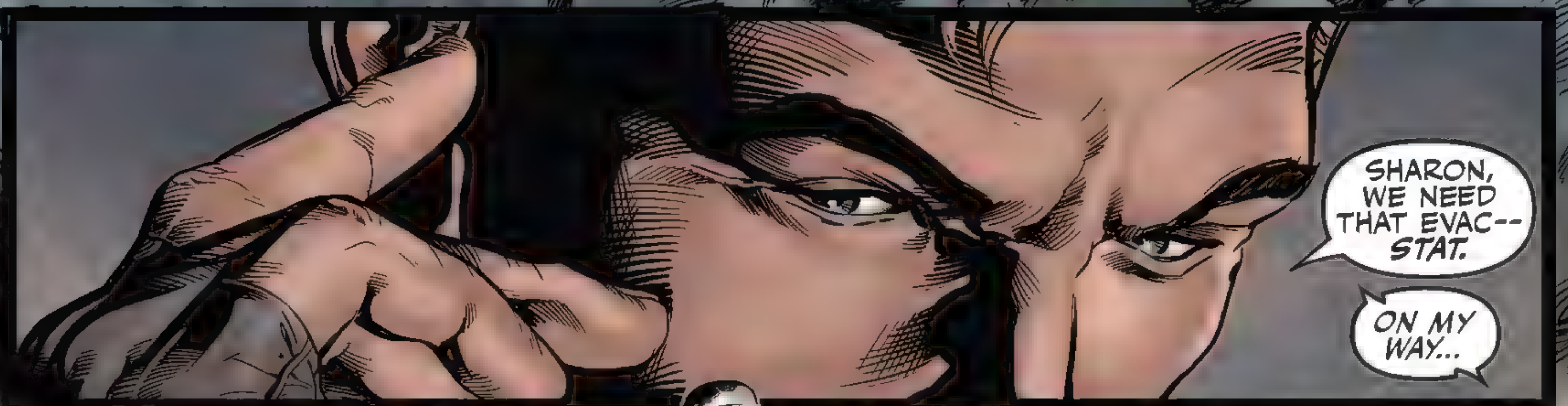
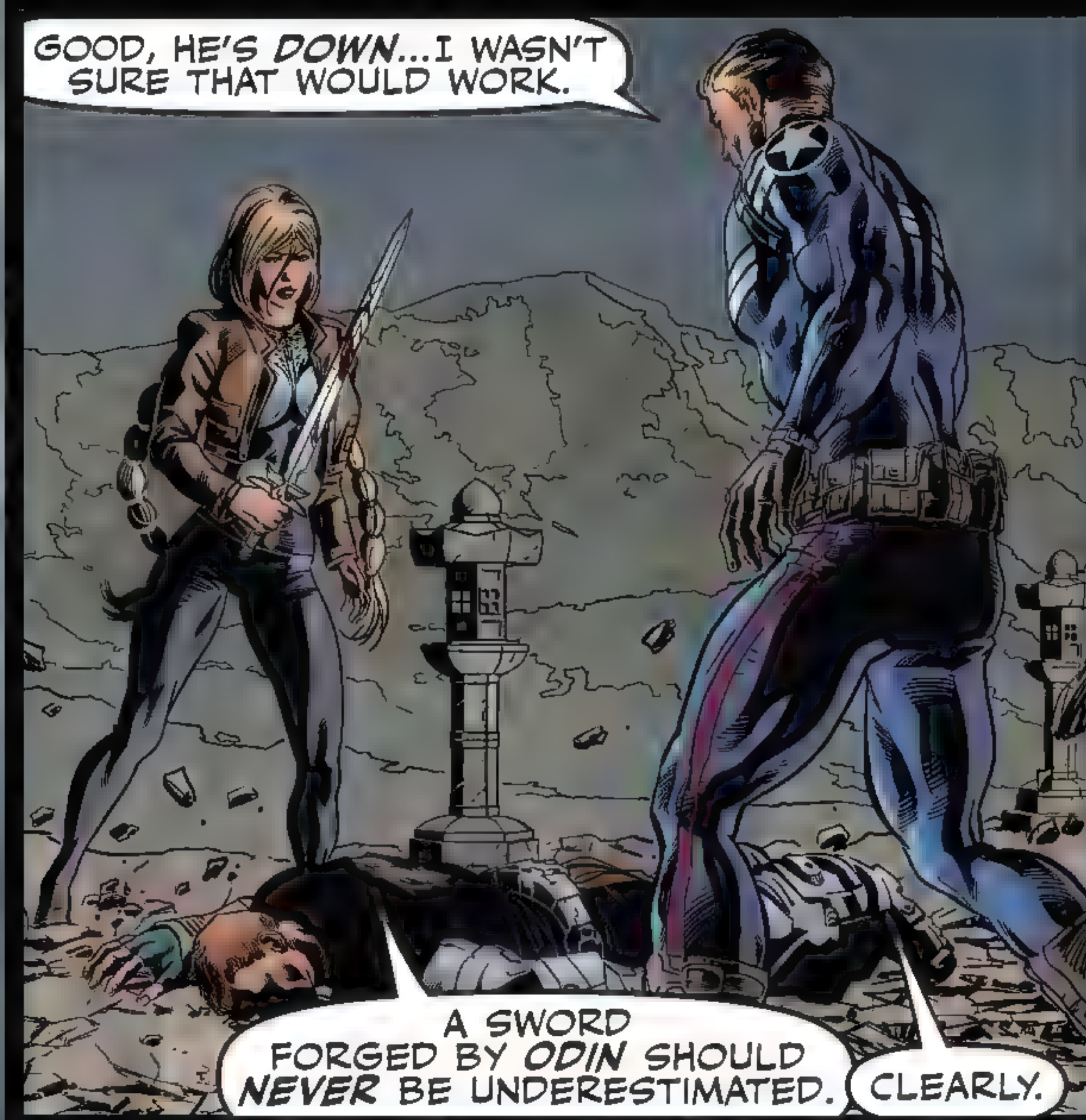
VERY
WELL.

THEN IT'S
ENDED.

SHHNNK

...BUT I'M...
BULLET-
PROOF...

KA-WAAAN



ONE WEEK LATER



I'M NOT SURE IF I SHOULD GIVE **CONDOLENCES** FOR YOUR FATHER...

BUT IT PROBABLY **STILL** FEELS LIKE A LOSS, SO I'M SORRY.

DON'T **BE**, PLEASE.

I'M **HONORED** TO HAVE FOUGHT AT YOUR SIDE.

ANY TIME I CAN RETURN THE FAVOR, DON'T HESITATE TO CALL ON ME.



DON'T THINK WE WON'T REMEMBER YOU SAID THAT.

SAFE TRAVELS, FRIEND.

AND TO YOU...

THE RAFT
MAXIMUM SECURITY SUPER-PRISON





WONDERED
HOW LONG
IT'D BE UNTIL
YOU SHOWED
UP.

I WAS JUST
WAITING UNTIL YOU
WERE HEALED
UP.

WHICH WAS
QUICKER THAN
EXPECTED.

COULDN'T
TAKE ME **YOURSELF**,
I NOTICED.

I **DID**
TAKE
YOU...

...OR
DON'T YOU
NOTICE THOSE
SHACKLES
YOU'RE IN?

OKAY...
SO WHAT DO
YOU WANT,
THEN?

I JUST
HAVE **ONE**
QUESTION...

...WHAT THE
HELL **HAPPENED**,
JOHN?

YOU USED
TO BE ONE OF THE
GOOD GUYS.







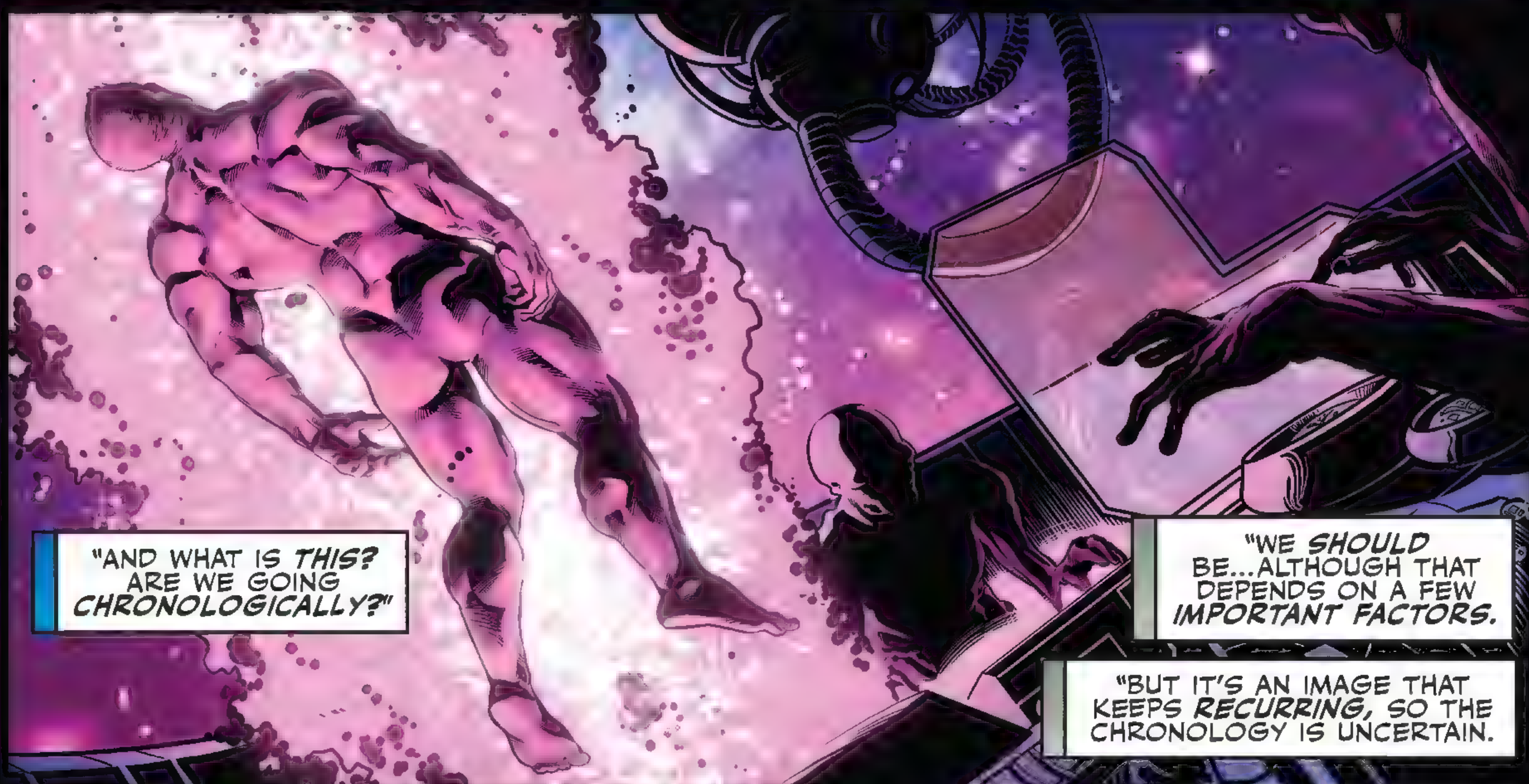
"SO...THAT'S
THE *CIVIL WAR*?
IS THAT WHAT
WE'RE SEEING?"

"YES, ALTHOUGH,
AS I SAID..."

"IT'S MORE *COMPLICATED*
THAN THAT, I KNOW."



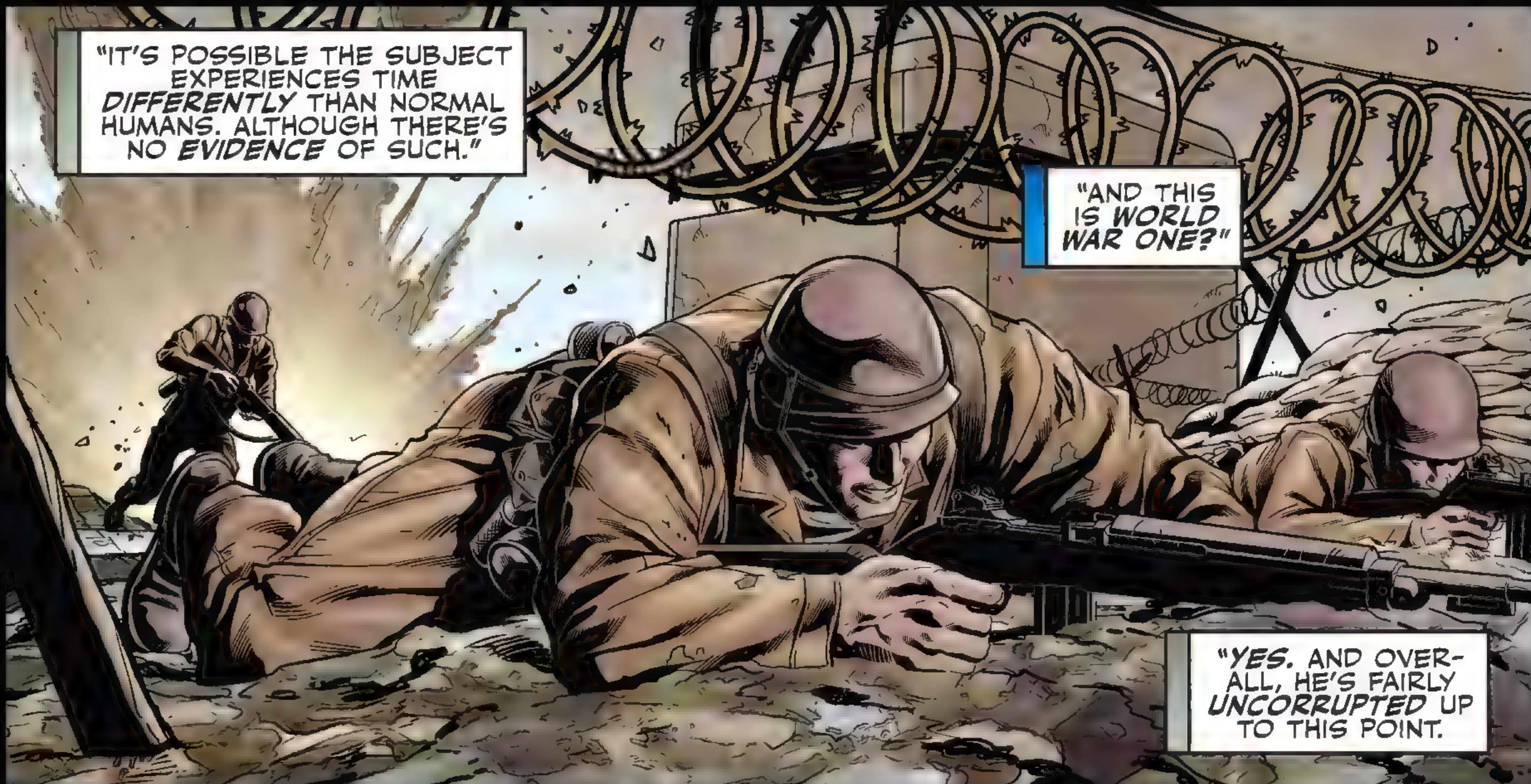
"AND THIS, WE *THINK*,
IS SOMEWHERE IN
TEXAS OR *ARIZONA*,
PROBABLY SEVERAL
YEARS LATER."



"AND WHAT IS *THIS*?
ARE WE GOING
CHRONOLOGICALLY?"

"WE *SHOULD*
BE...ALTHOUGH THAT
DEPENDS ON A FEW
IMPORTANT FACTORS."

"BUT IT'S AN IMAGE THAT
KEEPS *RECURRING*, SO THE
CHRONOLOGY IS UNCERTAIN."



"IT'S POSSIBLE THE SUBJECT EXPERIENCES TIME DIFFERENTLY THAN NORMAL HUMANS. ALTHOUGH THERE'S NO EVIDENCE OF SUCH."

"AND THIS IS WORLD WAR ONE?"

"YES. AND OVER-ALL, HE'S FAIRLY UNCORRUPTED UP TO THIS POINT."



"IT'S SOMEWHERE DURING WORLD WAR TWO THAT WE START RUNNING INTO TROUBLE."

"MISSING TIME. SUBJECTIVE INTERPRETATION."





"WAIT. CAN YOU STOP IT HERE?"

"THAT'S NOT HOW IT WORKS, STEVE."

"WELL, DO *WHATEVER* IT IS YOU *NEED* TO DO, THEN, HANK..."



"...BECAUSE I *KNOW* THIS PLACE."

"I *REMEMBER* THIS MISSION..."



"AND THIS IS *EXACTLY* WHAT WE'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR..."

A comic book illustration of Captain America in a control room. He is standing and pointing his right index finger at a large monitor displaying a battle scene. To his left, a man in a red jumpsuit and a helmet with a visor sits in a chair, looking towards the monitor. To Captain America's right, another man with long hair and glasses stands, looking at the monitor. The room is filled with various monitors and cables. A speech bubble from Captain America is in the upper right corner.

...THE
LAST TIME
JOHN STEELE WAS
SEEN IN ACTION
DURING WORLD
WAR TWO.

THE TROUBLE WITH JOHN STEELE



SO, CAN WE **UNLOCK** THAT MOMENT? FIND OUT WHAT **HAPPENED?**

THE CHAIR WAS BUILT SO ITS SUBJECTS WOULD EXPERIENCE **VIRTUAL LIVES** WITHOUT REALIZING THEY WERE **UNCONSCIOUS.**



I'VE ADAPTED IT SO WE CAN **EXAMINE MEMORY...** BUT AS I SAID, IT'S **COMPLICATED.**

WHAT WE'RE SEEING ARE THE **IMAGES HIS MIND CREATES DURING RECALL.**



IT'S NOT THE **EXACT TRUTH,** AND SOME OF IT EVEN MAKES NO SENSE...

AS I SAID, THERE ARE **PIECES MISSING.**



THE **REASON JOHN DISAPPEARED...**

WHAT **LED HIM** TO JOIN THE **SHADOW COUNCIL...**



THAT'S SOMEWHERE IN *THAT* MEMORY... *THAT* MISSION...

YOU *HAVE* TO FIND A WAY TO GO DEEPER.



WELL, THERE IS *ONE* IDEA, COMMANDER ROGERS.

LET'S HEAR IT.



YOU WERE WITH *HIM* ON *THAT* MISSION.

AND WE HAVE *ANOTHER* CHAIR.



WE COULD ISOLATE THIS INCIDENT IN *YOUR* MEMORY AND CROSS-REFERENCE TO TRY TO FIND *MISSING* PIECES OR--

ABSOLUTELY NOT, GARY!



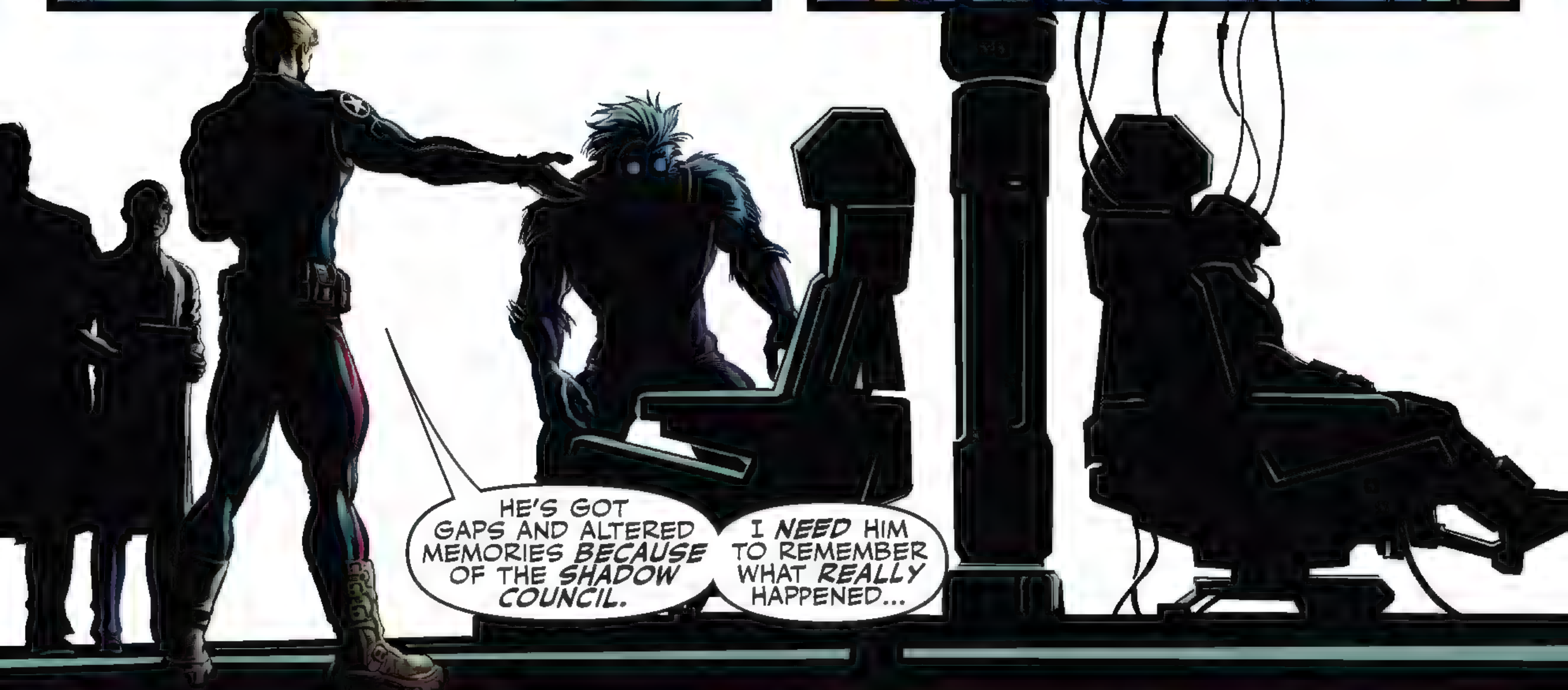
WE'RE NOT HOOKING THE COMMANDER UP TO AN EXPERIMENTAL--

IT'S OKAY, HANK. I'LL DO IT.



YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND, STEVE. YOUR MIND WILL BE LINKED WITH STEELE'S.

SHARING A MEMORY. WE HAVEN'T EVEN TESTED THAT FUNCTION YET.



HE'S GOT GAPS AND ALTERED MEMORIES BECAUSE OF THE SHADOW COUNCIL.

I NEED HIM TO REMEMBER WHAT REALLY HAPPENED...



...SO I CAN BRING HIM BACK TO THE RIGHT SIDE OF THIS FIGHT.

IF THIS WILL HELP, IT'S A RISK I'M WILLING TO TAKE.



NOW LET'S GET ON WITH IT.



"OKAY...NOW REMEMBER, STEVE, WHAT YOU'RE EXPERIENCING *ISN'T* REAL...IT'S A RECREATION OF A MEMORY."

YOUR INTEL WAS *RIGHT*, STEELE...

...IT LOOKS LIKE THE GERMANS HAVE A *MAJOR* OPERATION HERE.

THIS AREA USED TO BE *PRUSSIA*.

WHICH MEANS *WHAT*?

NOT SURE...

BUT I RECALL SOME *STRANGE RUMORS* ABOUT PRUSSIA FROM A LONG TIME BACK...

LOOKS LIKE WE'VE FOUND OUR SAFEST WAY INTO THE LION'S DEN.

NAZIS MUST THINK THEY'RE *PRETTY SAFE* HERE...

...THAT'S NOT MUCH OF A *GUARD UNIT* ON THEIR *BACK ENTRANCE*...



THINK
I CAN GET
THEM BOTH
FROM--

HOLD
YOUR HORSES,
STEELE... I'VE
GOT THIS.

KWAANG **KRAANG**



MAN.
ARE YOU
EVER GONNA
LET ME
TOSS THAT
THING?

NOT
EVEN
ONCE.

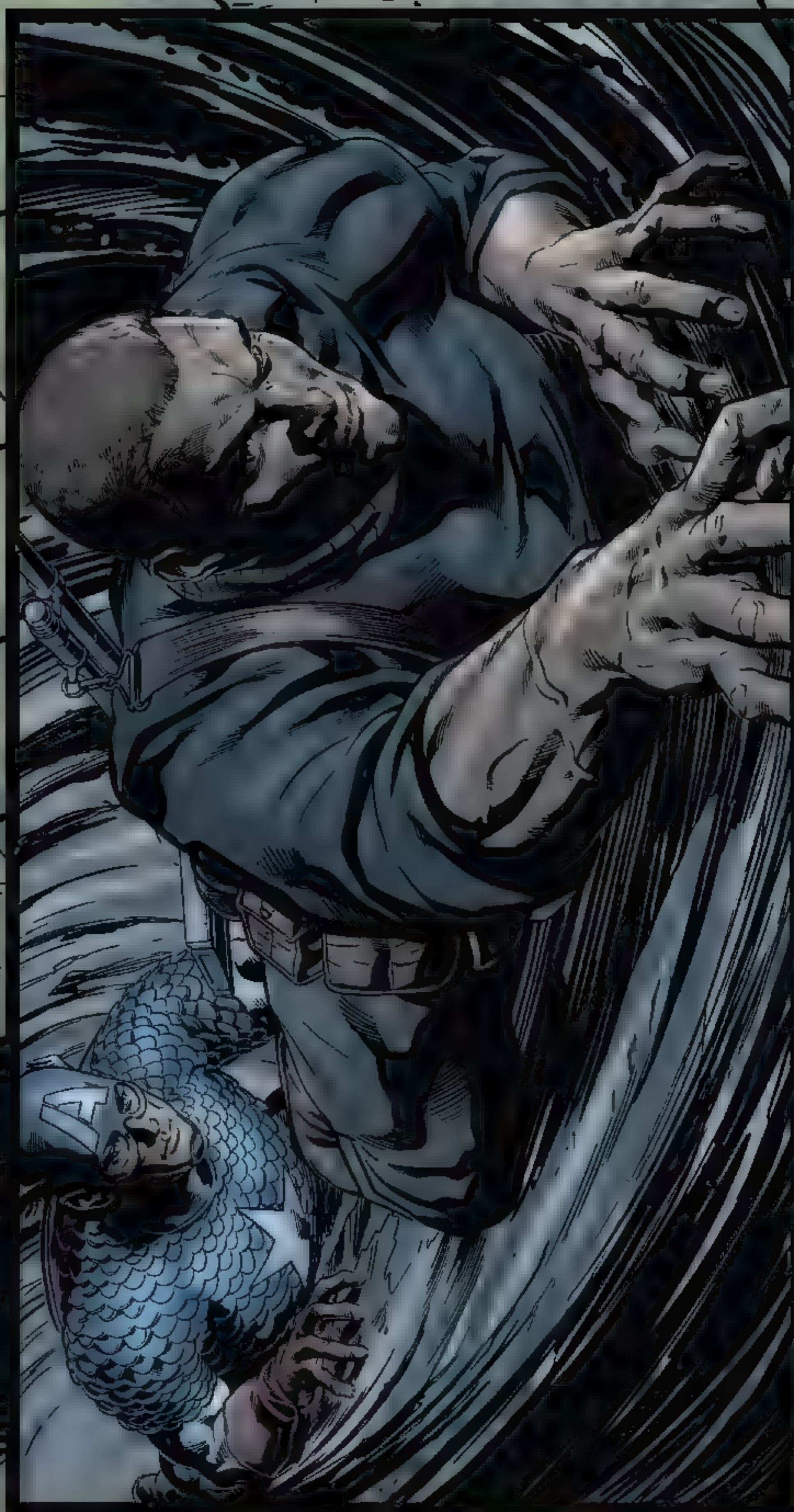
YOU'RE
DANGEROUS
ENOUGH AS
IT IS.



THIS IS OLD,
LIKE CENTURIES...
WON'T BEND...

MIGHT NOT
PRY OUT SO
EASILY...







YOU KNOW
MY FAVORITE
PART OF THIS
MISSION?

NO...
WHAT?



THAT YOU
DECIDED NOT TO
BRING YOUR INVADERS
PALS ALONG...

I MEAN,
WHO NEEDS A
HUMAN TORCH OR
TWO...RIGHT?



BUCKY'S
ON LEAVE, AND
FURY SAID THIS WAS A
CLANDESTINE OP,
SO--

OH.
HANG ON...
I THINK...

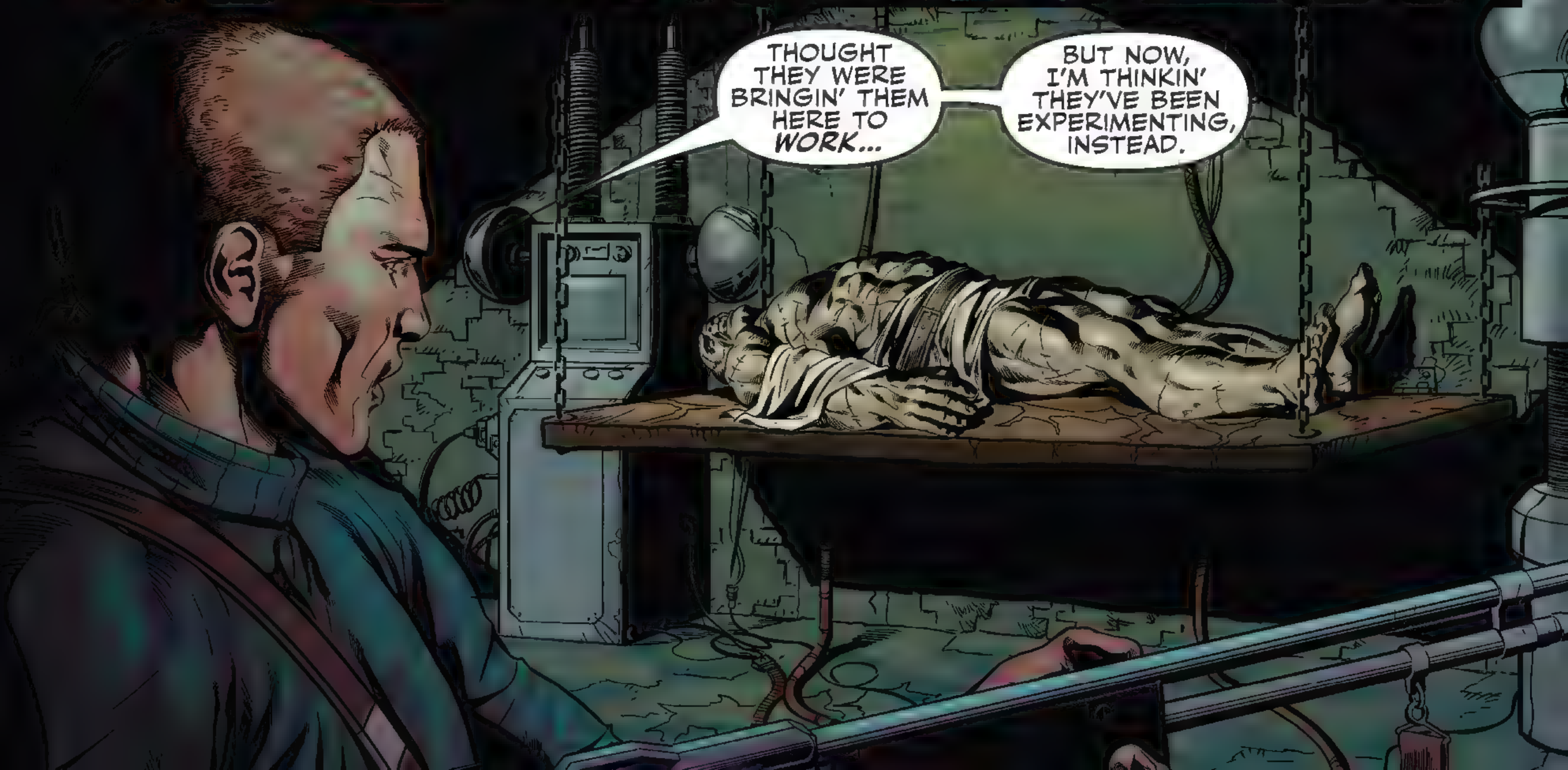


OH, GOD.

GRUUUUHH...









DOESN'T SEEM LIKE THOSE MONSTERS WOULD BE SO EASY TO CONTROL...

I WOULDN'T BE TOO SURE...



DAMN IT...

WHAT IS IT?



JUST... SOMETHING ABOUT THIS PLACE...

IT'S LIKE I CAN FEEL THE EVIL IN THE AIR...



AND IT FEELS FAMILIAR.



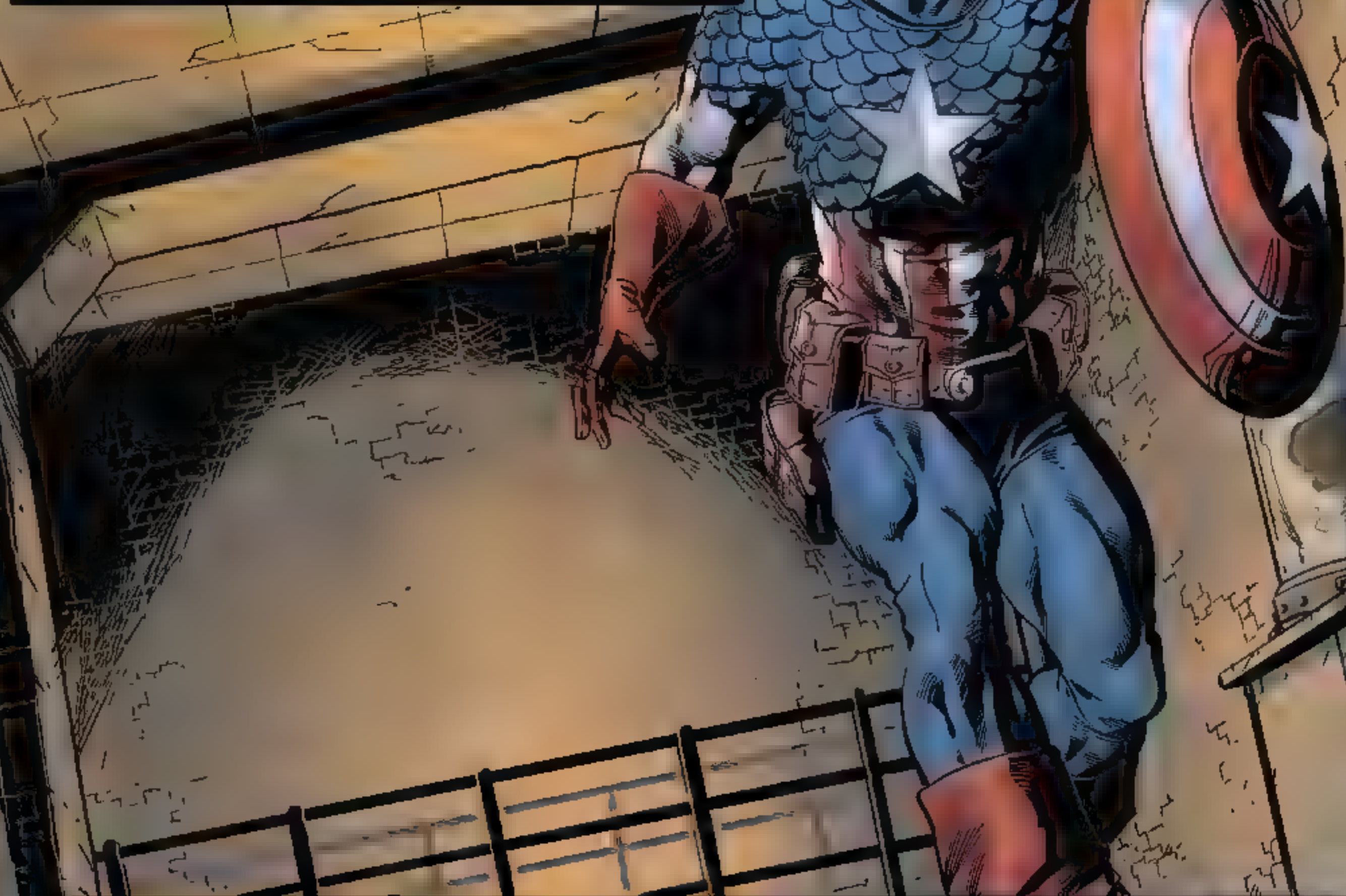


I KNOW
WHAT'S
HAPPENING
HERE.

...EVEN
IN *THIS*
GODFORSKEN
WARZONE...

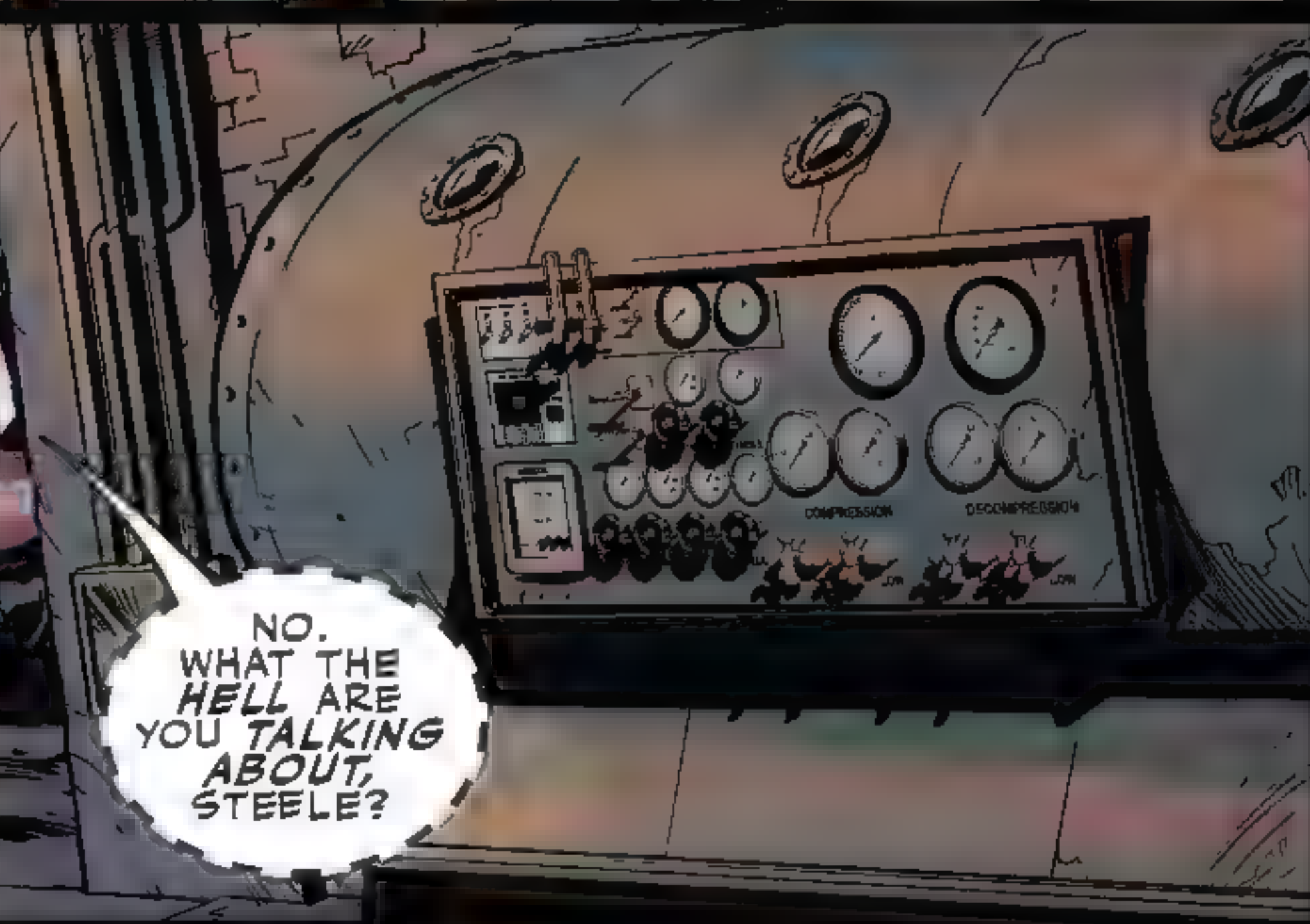
...THEY
STILL WORK THE
SHADOWS...

WHO?



GO.
TAKE THE RIGHT
CORRIDOR...

I'LL
FOLLOW
THE--



NO.
WHAT THE
HELL ARE
YOU TALKING
ABOUT,
STEELE?



THERE'S
NO TIME.

YOU
DON'T WASTE
ANY TIME
WITH *THESE*
PEOPLE.



WHAT
PEOPLE?



...WAIT...
WHAT IS
THIS...?

WHAT ARE
YOU DOING
TO ME...?

WHAT?
I'M NOT DOING
ANYTHING...

THIS
ISN'T RIGHT...
SOMETHING...

STEELE.
GET IT TOGETHER.
WE HAVE A--

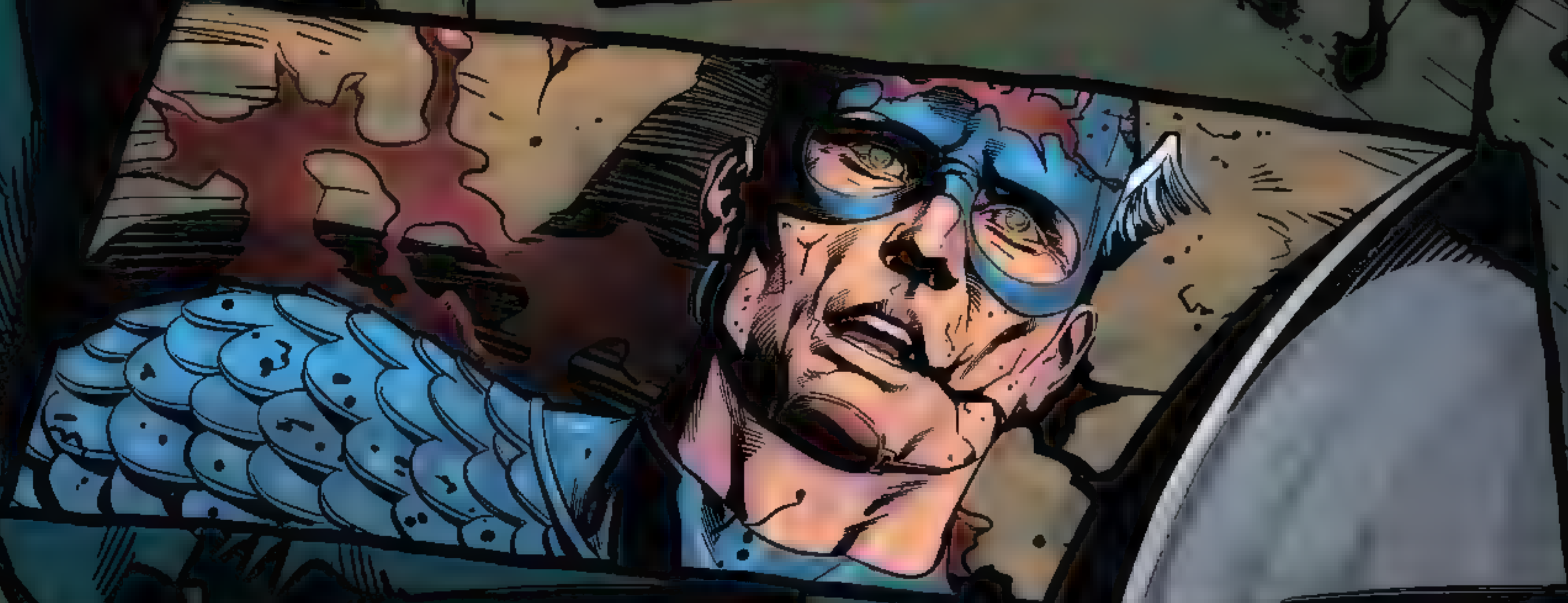
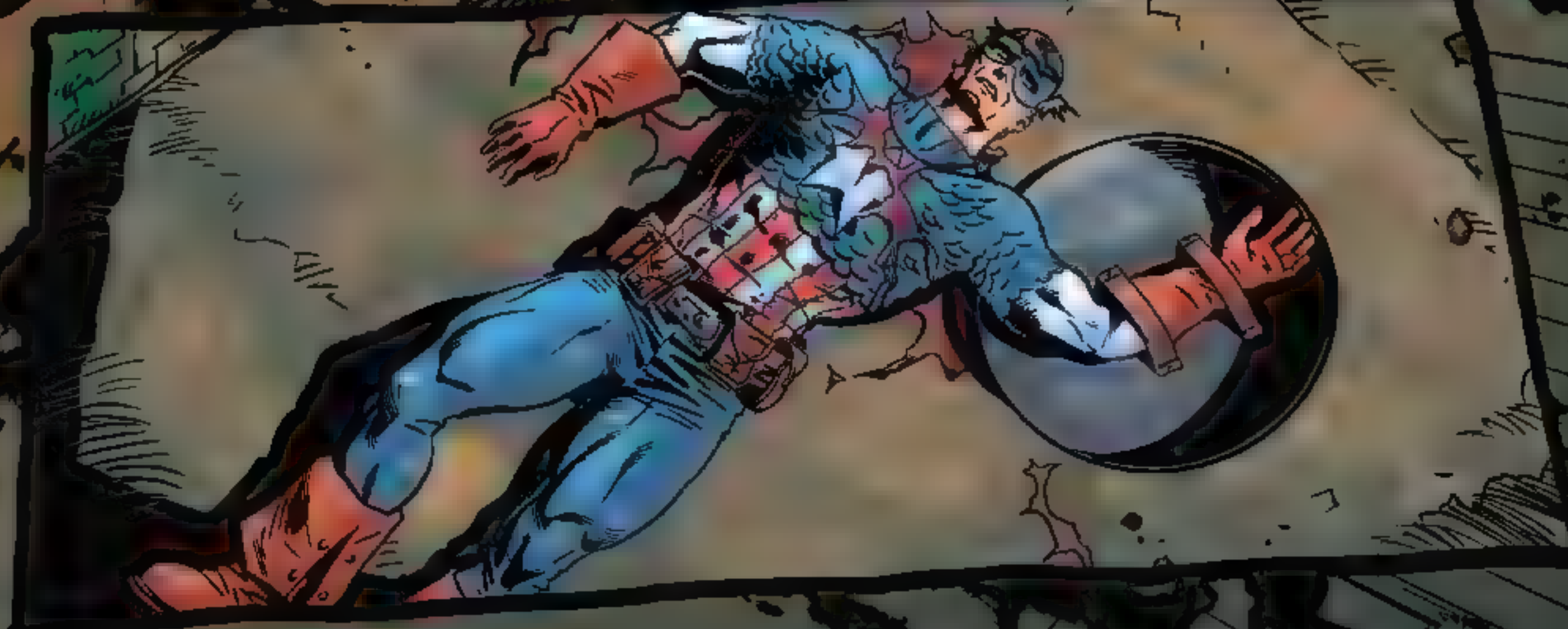
NO...IT'S...
YOU'RE DOING
SOMETHING.

JOHN,
LISTEN TO
ME...

AAAAHHHHH!

BLAAM

BLAMM



GAHHH!



OH,
THANK
GOD.

I
THOUGHT
THAT
MIGHT--

WHAT
WAS
THAT?



THAT WASN'T...
THAT *ISN'T* HOW
I REMEMBER
IT.

THAT'S
NOT WHAT
HAPPENED,
HANK.



I KNOW.

I TOLD
YOU THIS WAS
EXPERIMENTAL.



STEELE
BECAME AWARE
OF YOUR PRESENCE
IN HIS MIND...

HE--

PROFESSOR
McCOY!



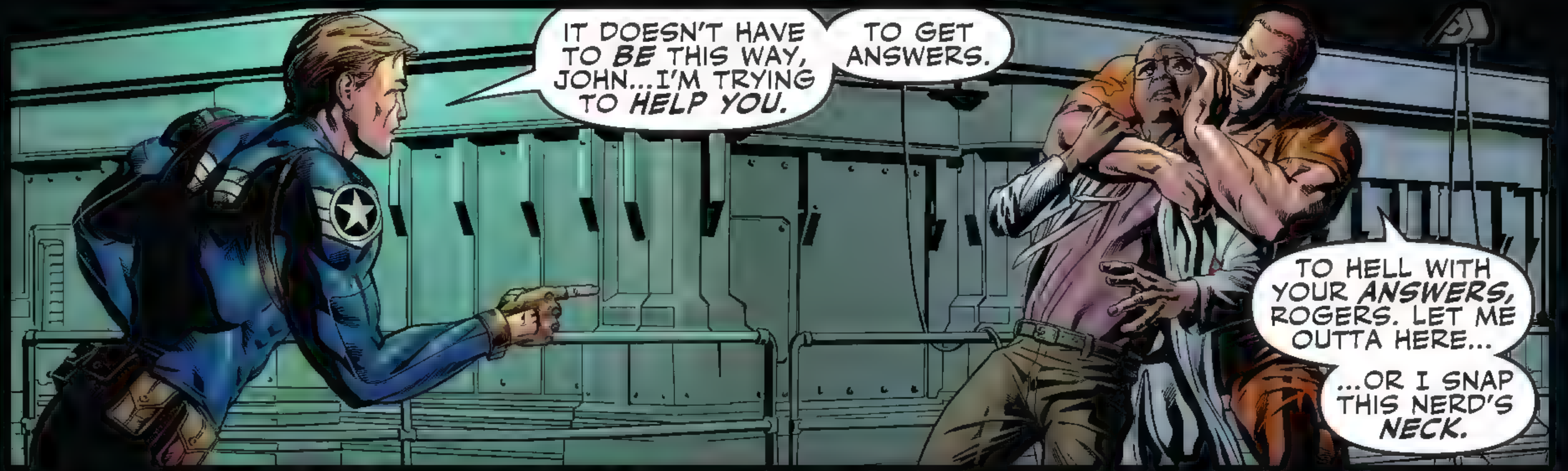
WHAT?!



WE'VE
GOT--
T-T-TROUB--
TROUB--

I THINK HE'S
TRYING TO SAY
"TROUBLE."







DAMN YOU!

POW



NO WAY YOU'RE THIS FAST.



HE'S NOT...

IT'S YOU WHO'VE BEEN MADE SLOWER.

DEEET



HSSSSS

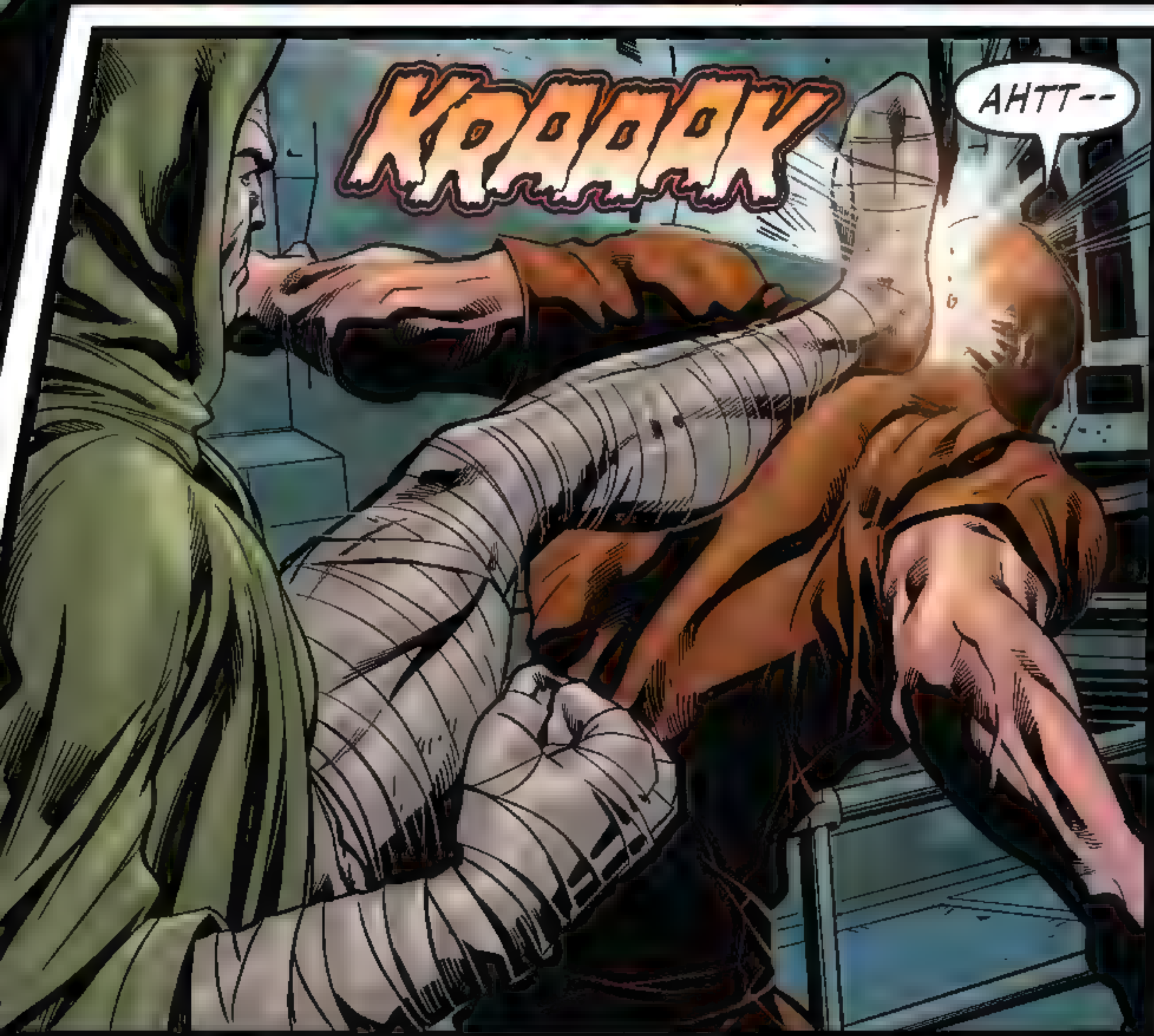
WE PREPARED FOR YOU THIS TIME, MR. STEELE.



FIRST YOU DOPE ME UP... NOW YOU GAS ME?

REALLY COVERING YOUR BASES, ROGERS...

WRONG AGAIN.



NOW...
WE'RE GOING
TO FIND OUT WHAT
HAPPENED TO YOU,
JOHN...

WHETHER
YOU WANT TO
KNOW OR
NOT...



DON'T WORRY, GARY... YOU AREN'T REALLY L.M.D.S...

I WAS BLUFFING.

OH, THANKS, SIR...

WHAT STEELE DID IN THERE, TAKING CONTROL OF THE MEMORY...

IS THERE A WAY I CAN COMMUNICATE WITH HIM WHILE WE'RE UNDER?

I... *THINK* I COULD MAKE THAT HAPPEN...

THEN PUT ME BACK IN.



"REMEMBER,
JOHN... THIS IS
IMPORTANT..."

"REMEMBER... WE
WERE HALFWAY INTO
THE *DUNGEONS*..."



"AND WE
SEPARATED..."

"WHERE
DID YOU
GO,
JOHN?"



"WHAT
HAPPENED
TO YOU?"

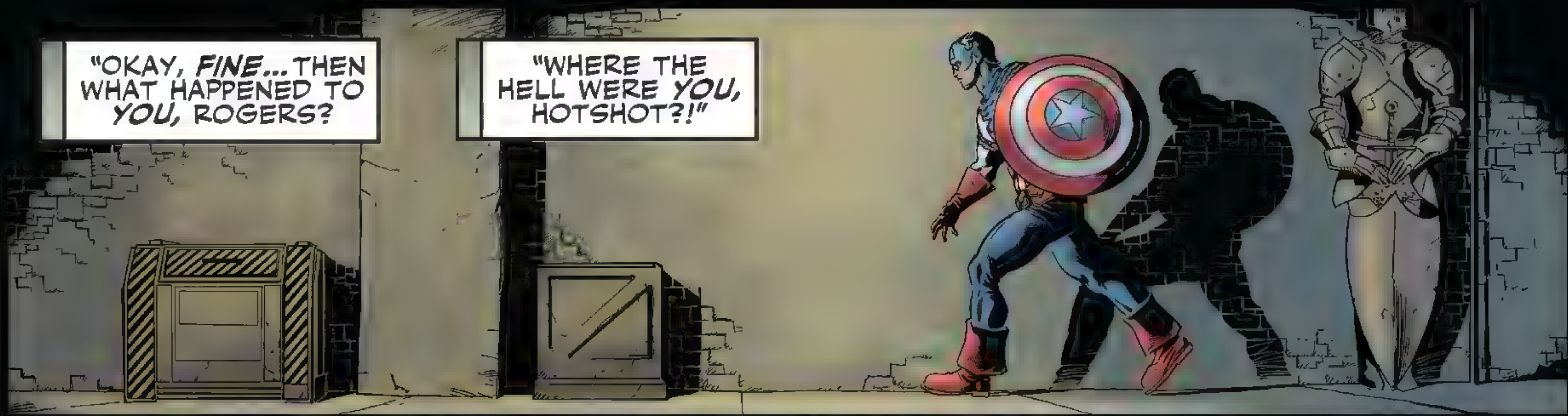
"GET OUTTA
MY HEAD,
ROGERS."

"DON'T YOU
WANT TO
KNOW, JOHN?"



"PIECES OF YOUR
MEMORY HAVE
BEEN *ERASED*..."

"DON'T YOU
WANT TO
KNOW THE
TRUTH?"



"OKAY, *FINE*... THEN
WHAT HAPPENED TO
YOU, ROGERS?"

"WHERE THE
HELL WERE YOU,
HOTSHOT?!"



...WHAT...



...THE
HELL...?

OH--
CAPTAIN--!



NO
TIME--
RUN!

WHY?

TRUST
ME!



SKRRREEEE!



KA-SMAASH

BY THE
STONES
OF RENK
TIMMA...

...THAT
GLORIOUS
FOOL.

"THAT'S WHAT
I WAS DOING,
JOHN..."

"RUNNING INTO
THE PRINCE
OF ORPHANS..."

"GETTING DRAGGED
ACROSS THE COUNTRYSIDE
BY SOME WYRM MONSTER..."



"...WHILE YOU
WERE...?"

"I
WAS--I--
HEY--"

"IT KEEPS
SLIPPIN' AWAY...
I CAN'T SEE..."

"...FIND OUT
WHY, JOHN."

AW...
DAMN
IT...

"FOCUS. THEY DON'T
WANT YOU TO
REMEMBER THIS..."

...YOU SICK
BASTARDS...

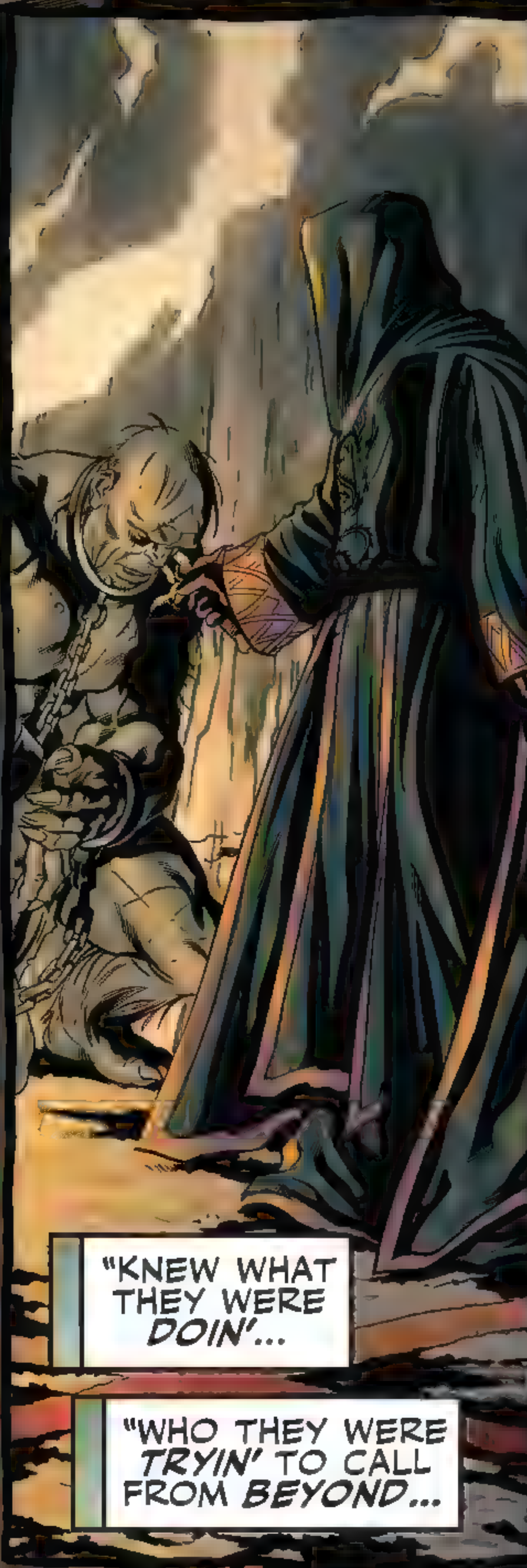
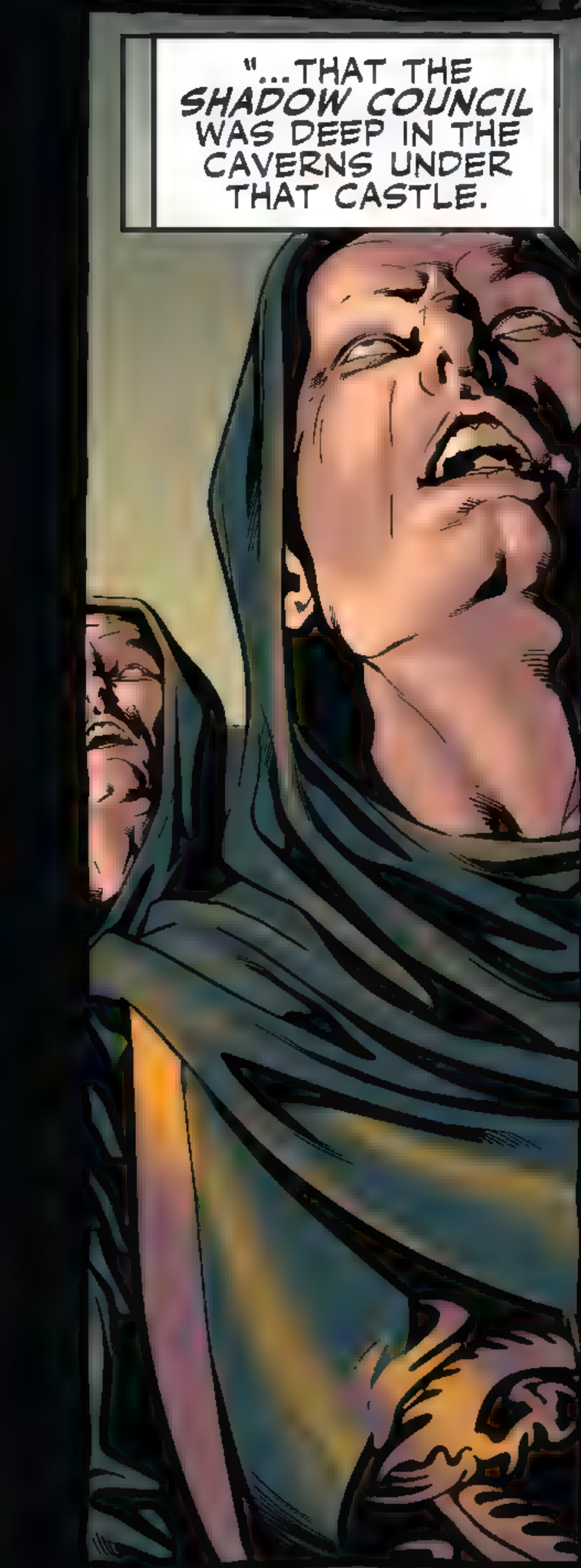


"I *KNEW*...
THAT'S WHY
I *SPLIT OFF*
FROM YOU.

"--WEIRD. LIKE
HEARING
ECHOES OF MY
OWN THOUGHTS
FROM THEN--

"BUT I *KNEW* IT
IN MY *BONES*...

"...THAT THE
SHADOW COUNCIL
WAS DEEP IN THE
CAVERNS UNDER
THAT CASTLE.



"KNEW WHAT
THEY WERE
DOIN'...

"WHO THEY WERE
TRYIN' TO CALL
FROM *BEYOND*...



"AN' IT WAS
TOO *HORRIBLE*
TO EVEN THINK
ABOUT..."

...BASTARDS...

BASTARDS!!!

**BUDDA
BUDDA
BUDDA
BUDDA
BUDDA
BUDDA**

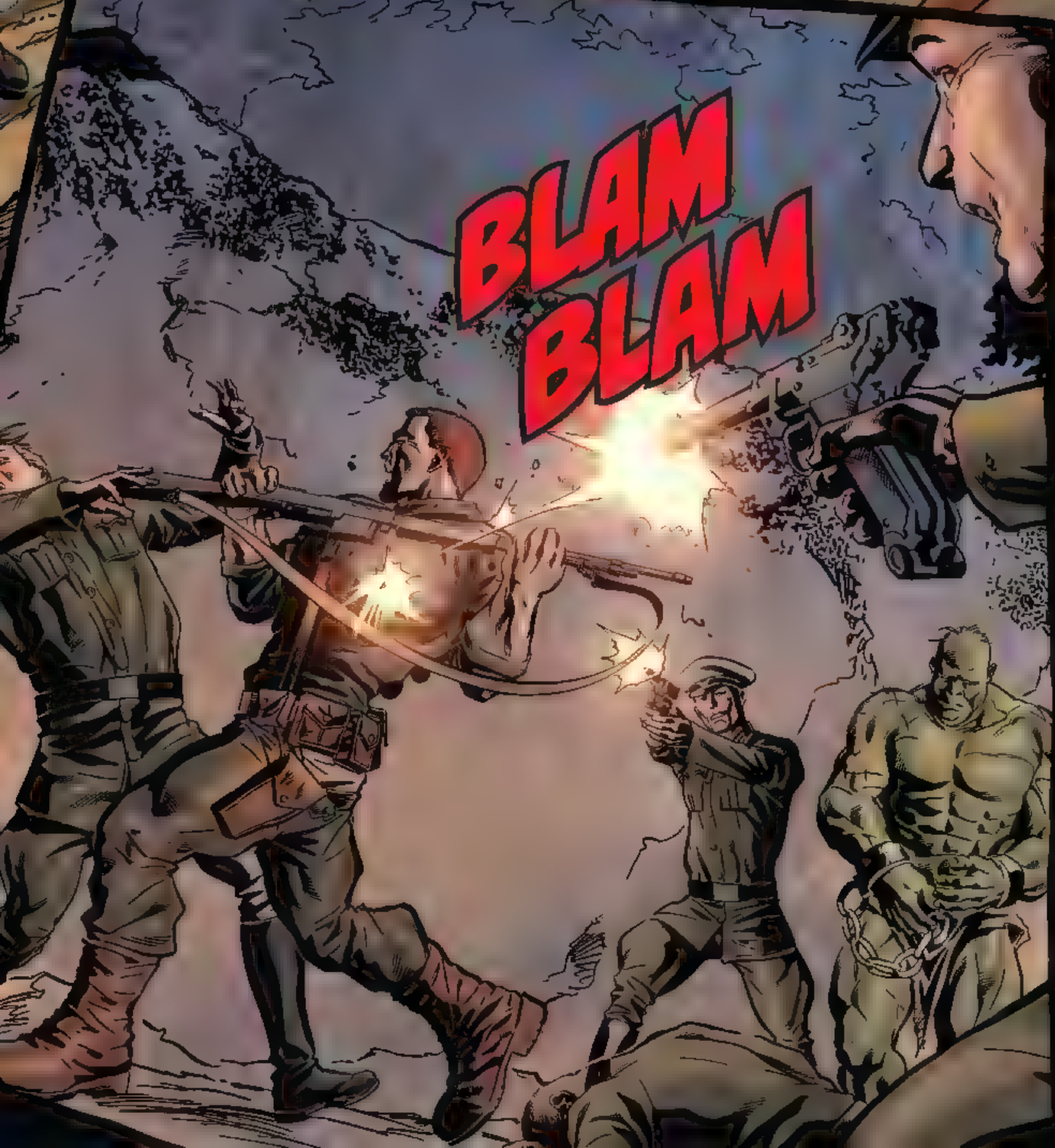


UKK--!

BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA



"BUT I WASN'T
BEIN' SMART..."



**BLAM
BLAM**



"I WAS JUST
CHARGING IN..."



"...LOST IN MY RAGE.



"I DIDN'T
HAVE A
PLAN.



"AND THEY *DID*."

GYAAAAAAH!



SO
NICE TO SEE
YOU AFTER ALL
THESE YEARS,
JOHN...



...WE WERE
WONDERING
WHEN YOU'D
ARRIVE.

"THAT WOULD'VE
BEEN A GOOD TIME
FOR YOU TO *SHOW*
UP, ROGERS.

"BUT I GUESS
YOU HAD
YOUR *HANDS*
FULL, TOO..."

KNINCH

UNNH!

YES,
THIS WAS A
BRILLIANT PLAN,
CAPTAIN...



WE CAN'T
JUST *RUN*...
WE HAVE TO
KILL IT.

AGREED...
YOU HAVE ANY
IDEAS HOW TO
DO THAT?



ONE... BUT
IT DEPENDS
ON YOU.

I'M
LISTENING.



YOU THINK
YOU CAN CARRY
GRENADES WHILE
YOU'RE IN YOUR
MIST FORM?



YOU
HAVE TO STOP,
THORNDRAKE!

THIS IS
CRAZY!



GRAAA--

DON'T BE
RIDICULOUS,
JOHN...



...WE'RE
DOING ALL OF
THIS FOR YOUR
BENEFIT.

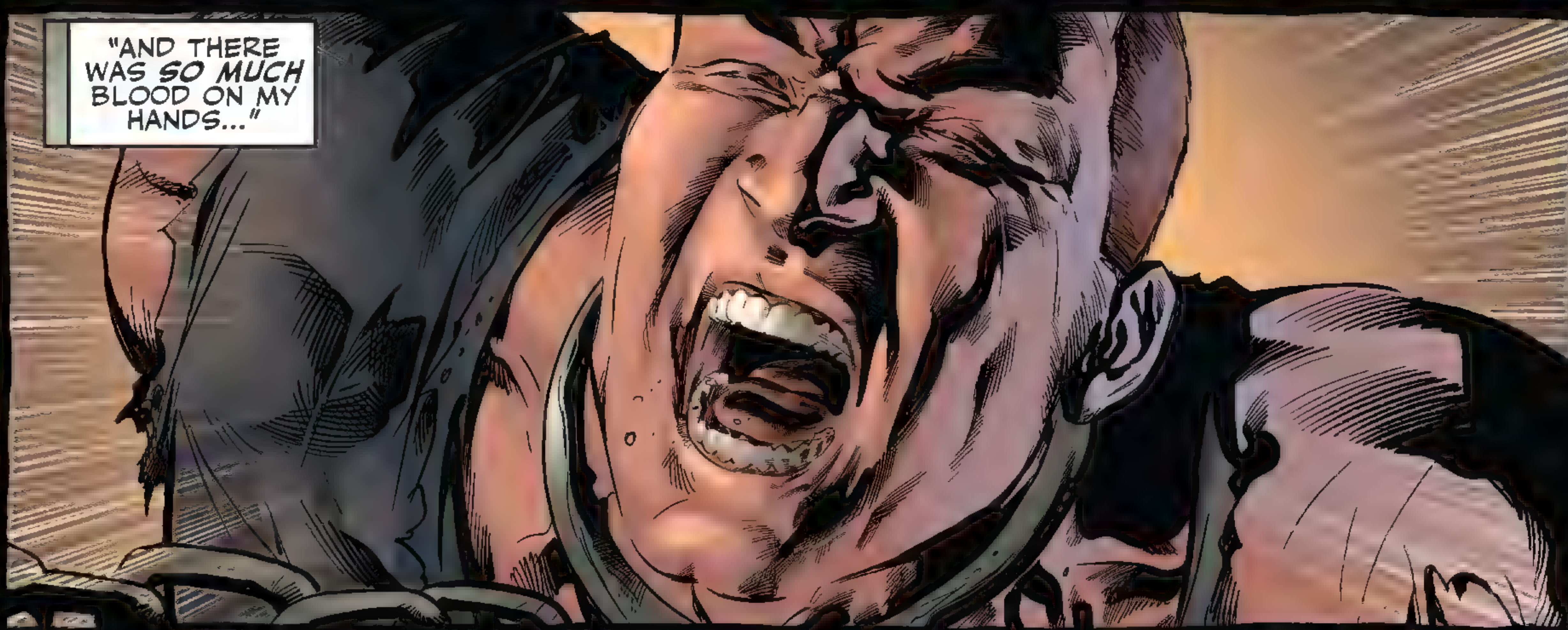
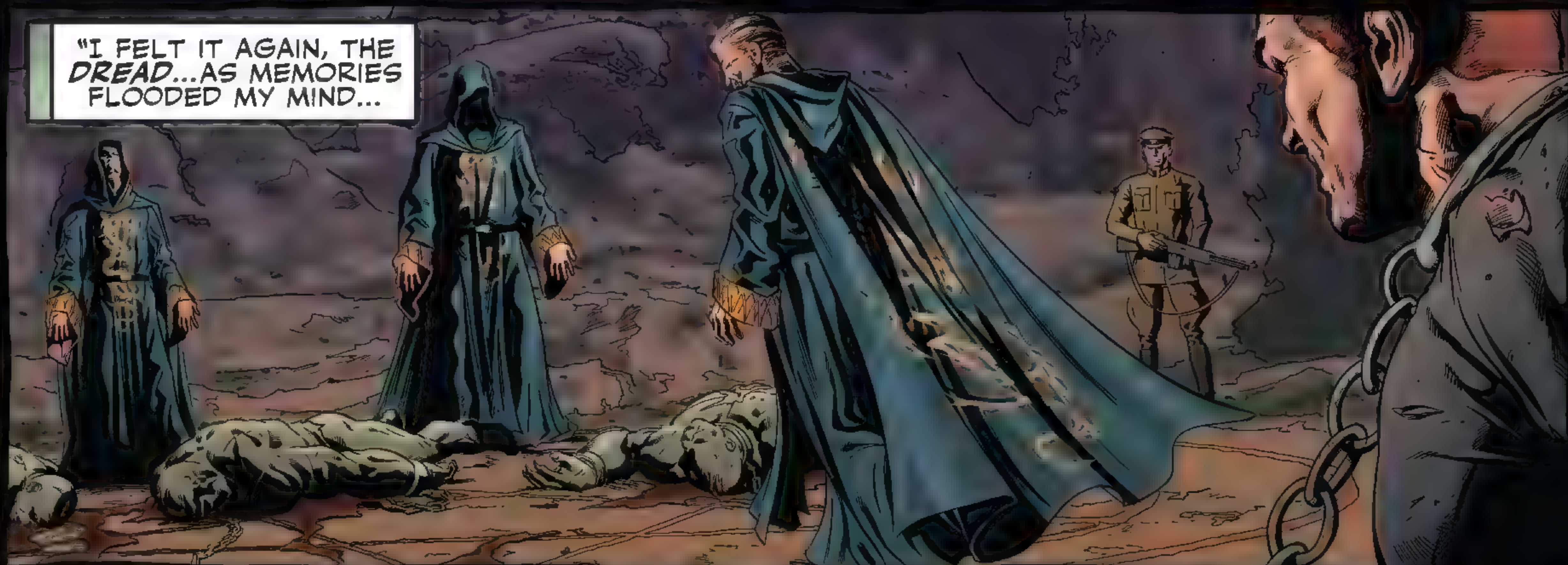
WE LURED
YOU HERE, YOU
OLD FOOL.

LUNATIC!



WAS
IT REALLY
THAT LONG AGO
YOU WERE WILLING
TO DO NEARLY
ANYTHING...

...TO FEEL
YOUR MASTER'S
TOUCH ONE
MORE TIME?





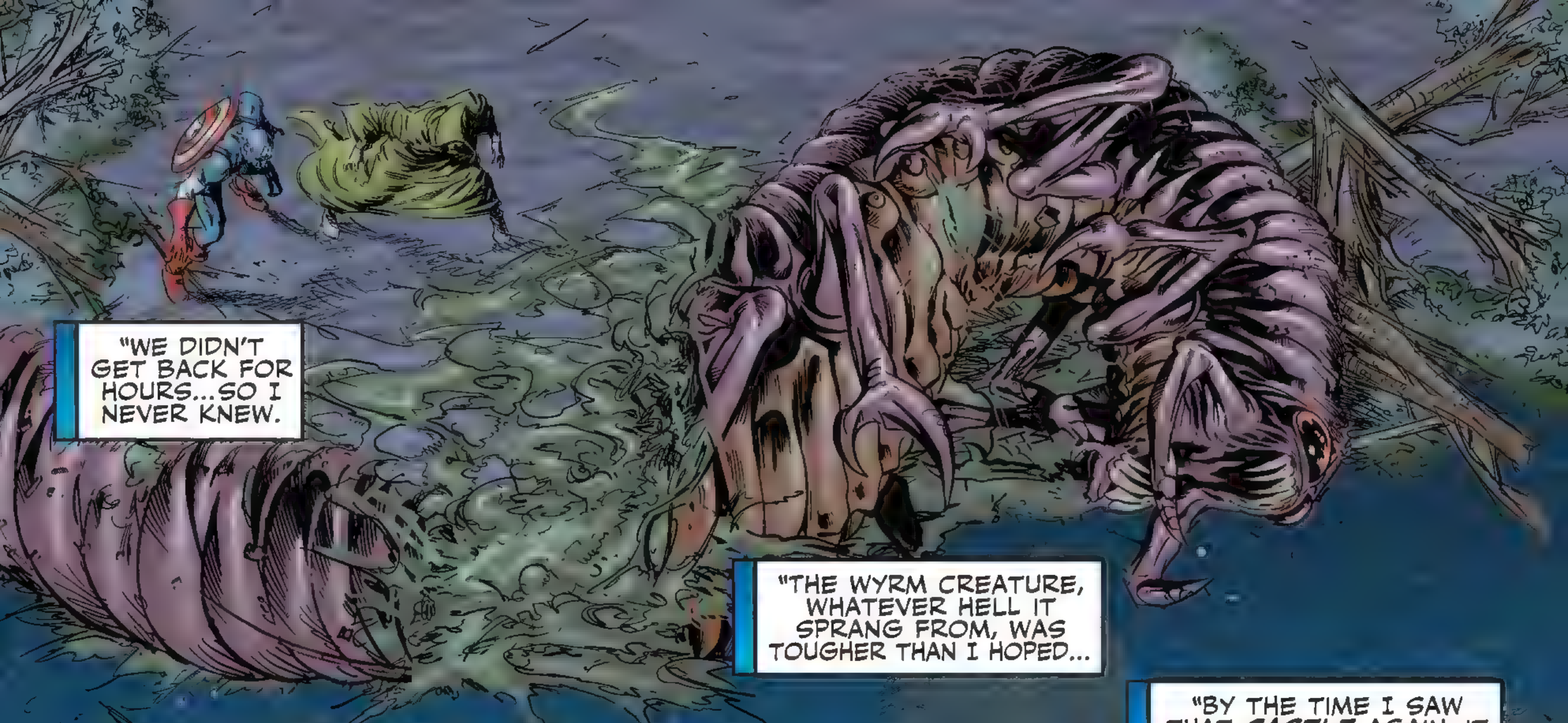
"I SCREAMED AS
THEY COMPLETED
THEIR RITUAL..."



"AND REALITY
RIPPED OPEN..."



"...AND THE
ABYSS GAZED
INTO ME ONCE
AGAIN."



"WE DIDN'T
GET BACK FOR
HOURS... SO I
NEVER KNEW."

"THE WYRM CREATURE,
WHATEVER HELL IT
SPRANG FROM, WAS
TOUGHER THAN I HOPED..."

"BY THE TIME I SAW
THAT *CASTLE* AGAIN, IT
WAS IN RUINS... ALMOST
LIKE IT'D IMPOLODED."



"WE SEARCHED
THE RUBBLE FOR
HOURS, BUT
THERE WAS NO
SIGN OF YOU."



NO, THERE WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN...BY THAT POINT...

...I WAS LONG GONE.

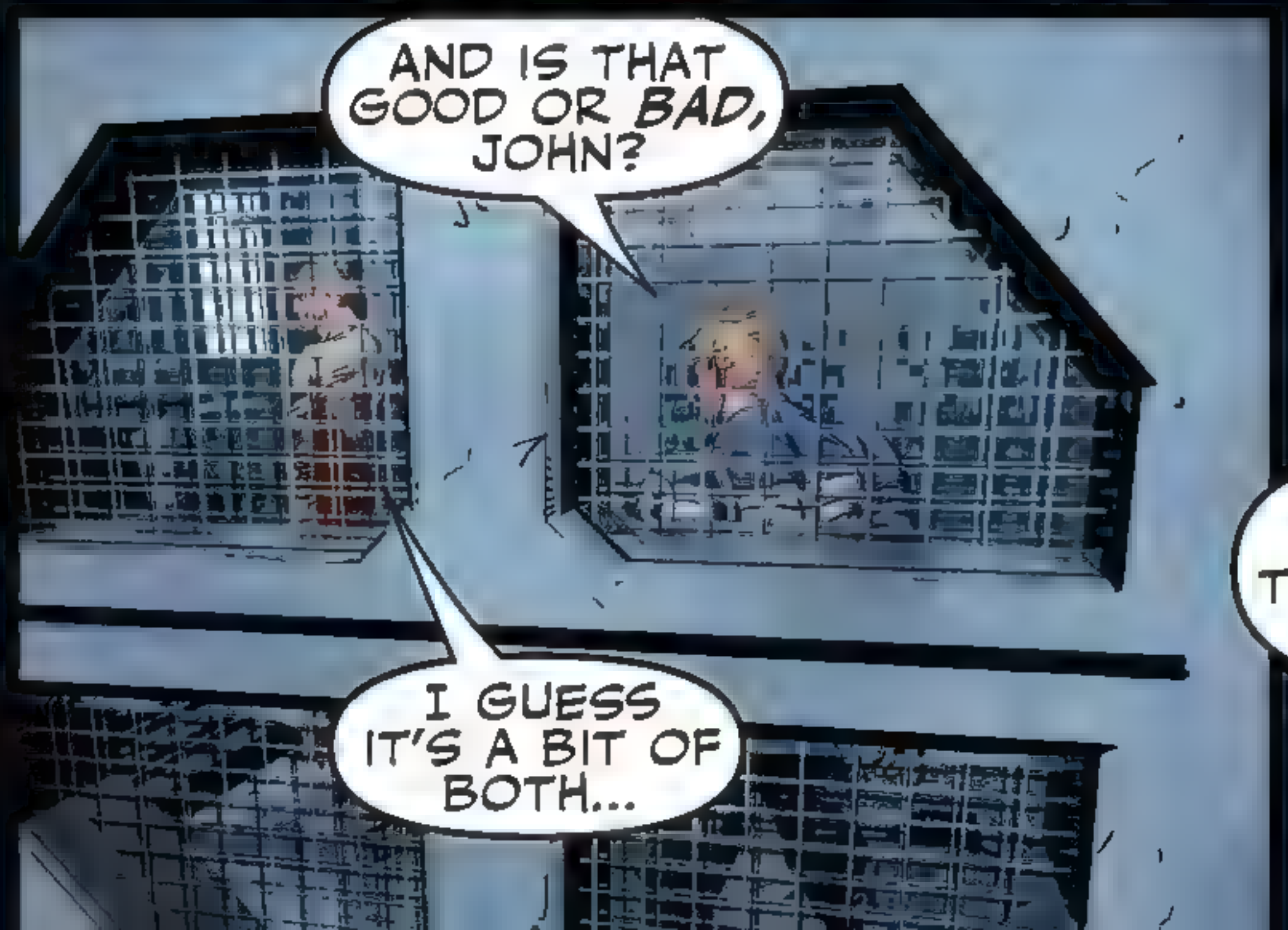


OFF UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF...I CAN'T EVEN SAY WHAT...

AND NOW?



NOW I'M ME AGAIN... FINALLY.



AND IS THAT GOOD OR BAD, JOHN?

I GUESS IT'S A BIT OF BOTH...



SO WHO ARE THE SHADOW COUNCIL?

WHAT DO THEY WANT?



THEY'RE THE
ORIGINAL SORE
LOSERS.

SONS OF A
REVOLUTION THAT
FAILED A LONG
TIME AGO...

I WAS
RUNNING FROM
THEM WHEN WE ALL
STUMBLED INTO A
PORTAL...

A PATH
BETWEEN TIME
AND SPACE...

AND THE
THINGS WE
MET INSIDE IT
CHANGED
US.

AS
FOR WHAT
THEY WANT...
THEY WANT
IT ALL...

THE
WHOLE
WORLD...

SO HOW
DO I *STOP*
THEM?



I'M NOT SURE YOU CAN, ROGERS.

THEY'VE GOT MORE POWER BURIED DEEP IN THE DARK THAN YOU CAN KNOW...



I SPENT HALF MY LIFE ON THE RUN FROM THOSE SONS OF BITCHES...

THE OTHER HALF UNDER THEIR THUMBS...

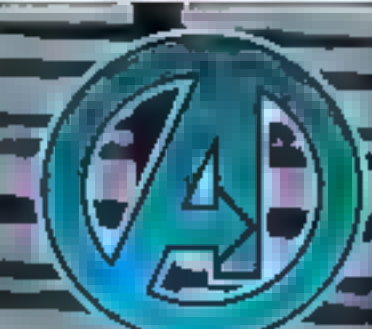
SO YOU'D RATHER JUST ROT IN A CELL?



OR DO YOU WANT TO DO *SOMETHING* ABOUT THE MEN WHO STOLE HALF YOUR LIFE?

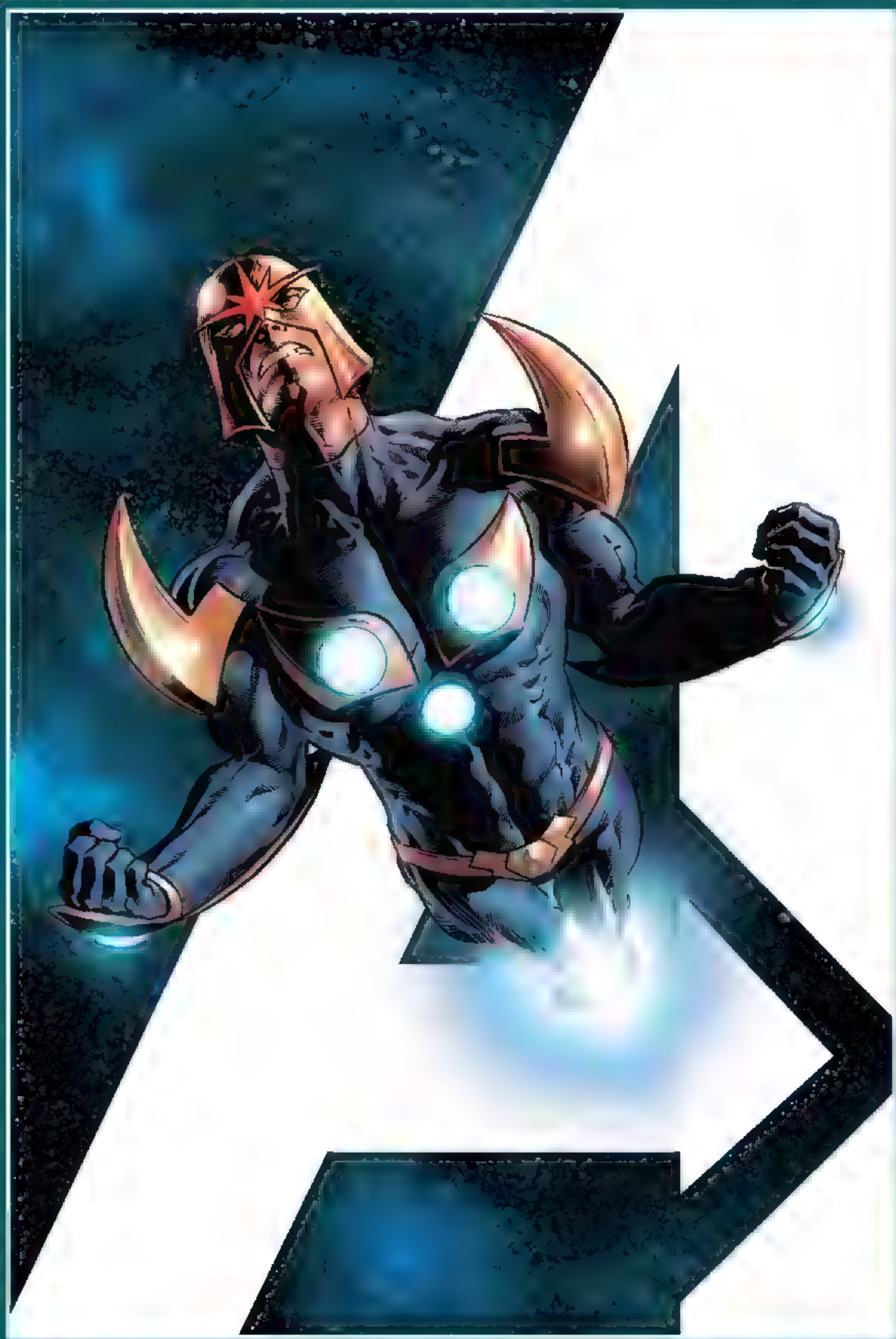


WHAT DID YOU HAVE IN MIND?





#2 VARIANT BY **MIKE DEODATO JR. & RAIN BEREDO**



#1-4 VARIANTS BY MIKE DEODATO JR. & RAIN BEREDO



#5-6 VARIANTS BY **MIKE DEODATO JR. & RAIN BEREDO**



#2 SECOND PRINTING SKETCH VARIANT BY **MIKE DEODATO JR. & RAIN BEREDO**



#3 WOMEN OF MARVEL FRAME VARIANT BY **CHRIS BACHALO & TIM TOWNSEND**



#6 WOMEN OF MARVEL VARIANT BY JELENA KEVIĆ DJURDJEVIĆ



#7 VAMPIRE VARIANT BY **AMANDA CONNER & PAUL MOUNTS**



#7 TRON VARIANT BY **MARK BROOKS**



#11 CAPTAIN AMERICA 70TH ANNIVERSARY VARIANT
BY **SIMONE BIANCHI** & **SIMONE PERUZZI**



#12 THOR GOES HOLLYWOOD VARIANT BY **MICHAEL KALUTA**

Unveiling The Secret Avengers

Long held under strictest confidentiality, Marvel's next big Avengers comic finally sees the light of day with Ed Brubaker's espionage ethos going undercover as a super-hero team.

BY KIEL PHEGLEY

In March, Marvel Comics took the Internet by storm with a series of images revealing the lineups of their upcoming Heroic Age Avengers teams. From Iron Man to Spider-Woman, dynamic posters of the Marvel Universe's biggest names punched, kicked and flew across the screens of fans everywhere — spurring speculation and discussion wherever they appeared.

But beyond the bright stars behind the core team comics including *Avengers* and *New Avengers*, a shadowy set of images crept into place as well. Drenched in shadowy ink and bold while still being ambiguous, the publisher teased readers with silhouetted figures crawling and cutting their way into Marveldom with one rallying cry behind them: "I am a Secret Avenger."

Speculation ran wild throughout the Spring: which Marvel hero wears a tattered cape? Who could lay claim to forearms of iron? What hero blasted off like a rocket from the crypt? While a few crafty readers cracked the code on select members of the team, only now can it be revealed which unlikely heroes combine under the leadership of former Captain America Steve Rogers to star in *Secret Avengers* — the new ongoing series from award-winning writer Ed Brubaker and superstar artist Mike Deodato.

Ed Brubaker opens up about his plans for the Heroic Age's most unpredictable Avengers book — a cloak and dagger espionage comic that won't skimp on super-hero action — and reveals why his lineup of Steve Rogers, Sharon Carter, Black Widow, Nova, War Machine, Valkyrie, the Irredeemable Ant-Man, Moon Knight and the Beast make the *Secret Avengers* a must-read team in their May debut.

KIEL PHEGLEY: How did you get brought in to write an *Avengers* series? Had you wanted to do a team book?

ED BRUBAKER: It partially came from a couple of creative summits ago where we were talking about what would happen to all of the books post-Siege and how the Avengers would change. I had been looking to do a Marvel espionage book for a while, and I was kind of bummed that [Jonathan] Hickman got to do that instead of me. [Laughs] But I like what he's doing with *S.H.I.E.L.D.*, and I've been so busy with stuff. But it seemed like with Steve Rogers coming back and not being Captain America right away, my initial pitch was "Steve Rogers becomes the new Nick Fury of the Marvel Universe."

Then we came up with the idea of Steve being put in charge of an Avengers Initiative. They say to him, "We need a new *S.H.I.E.L.D.*" and he says, "No. You don't need that much. I don't want to run a giant global agency. I can do it with a lot less." So he takes the Avengers and turns them into a new thing that's like *S.H.I.E.L.D.* crossed with the Avengers. He's in charge of all of these separate Avengers hands that all coordinate with each other, and the one I thought was most interesting was a secret team — not necessarily a black ops team because they don't go in and wipe everybody out — but of a secret, high-concept spy team. A team that isn't necessarily teaming up to fight giant monsters, but a team that says, "We think the Chinese have a fallen spaceship that they're experimenting on and we need to get that out of their hands." Or maybe it's an evil corporation or who knows what. So Steve has this team of people he puts together that don't necessarily work on giant teams that well but work really well

It's like he reinvents himself for every new project. He's constantly experimenting and trying different artistic techniques. That was one of the things that attracted me about him.

— Brubaker on Deodato's artwork



together when you send in two to sneak around someplace and steal something or go undercover.

For me, it was basically a chance to do a team book that was different than any kind of Avengers book we've ever had. It's more of a high-octane spy thing. That's what I'm trying to do with the book — a high-octane mashup between an espionage book and a super-hero book.

KP: You've done team books before, but even your past team books have rarely been about double-page spreads with lots of laser beams and godlike super villains. How does *Secret Avengers* allow you to do the tighter, character-focused writing you're known for within the big team franchise?

EB: I have done team books before. I've done *The Authority* and the *X-Men*, but I

still never felt like I brought my voice to it. I feel with a team book, to some degree you're trying to hit certain moments that reflect what people like about that team. Whereas, with something like this it's much more in my wheelhouse. When we came up with this as a book for Steve and I came up with a bunch of the ideas for it as we were pitching it — I said, "So I guess I'm writing that book?" and everyone went, "Of course." And Tom [Brevoort, my editor] pointed out that in a lot of ways Cap, after the death of Captain America, became a team book. It just wasn't a team book where they all came together and went out after a single threat all the time. But it was this giant ensemble cast of people. And that really opened my eyes to go, "Maybe I can pull this off." For me, the challenge is trying to do a team book that still feels like me.

That's what I think is most successful about Brian [Michael Bendis'] Avengers stuff — it really still feels like a Bendis book. I'm somebody who's been reading his comics for almost 20 years, and it still feels like the same writer.

So this is my challenge to try and make a book like this that doesn't just feel like another Avengers book and really feels like a book with my voice on it.

KP: A lot of people are going to be wondering how Steve Rogers works here. Why is it that he wants to leave the Captain America mantle with Bucky, and will he have a new costume or be in a paramilitary getup like Fury always was?

EB: He's got a uniform that Marko Djurdjevic designed. It's a new look. Primarily the reason he wanted Bucky to



PEDAL TO THE METAL Brubaker's script is high-octance adventure from the get-go, as illustrated in this scene from *Secret Avengers* #1

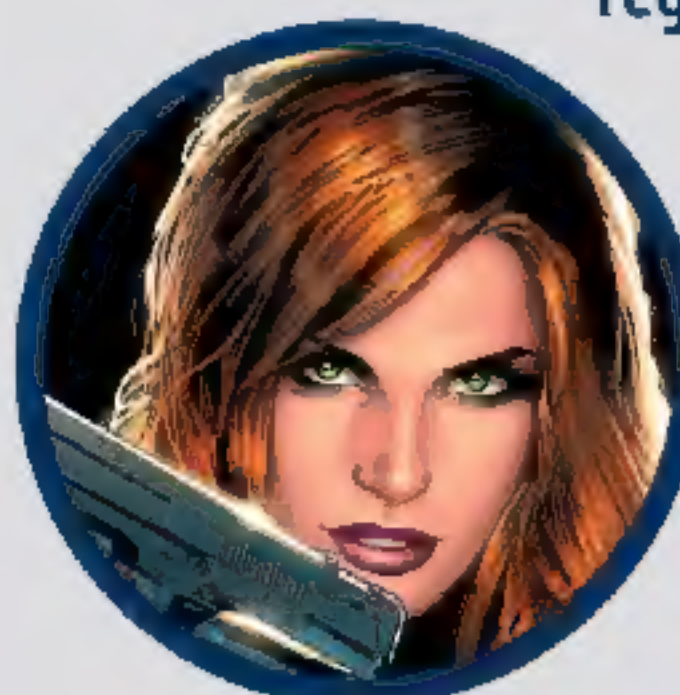
Rogers Recruits

Ed Brubaker goes inside Steve Rogers' head to explain why each Secret Avenger is a perfect pick for a team with a new mission.

SHARON CARTER, AGENT 13

Not only his on-again, off-again girlfriend but also one of his most trusted mission partners, superspy Sharon Carter runs operations for the Secret Avengers team. "She was a high-ranking S.H.I.E.L.D. agent, and having her and Steve in this book gives her a chance to continue their relationship," Brubaker promises. "She becomes the person in tactical ops. She'll go out into the field sometimes too, but she's sort of coordinating everything and is the team's eye in the sky."

BLACK WIDOW
Soon the star of both a hit summer movie and her own ongoing comic, the lethal Russian lady known as the Black Widow can sneak anywhere in the Marvel Universe. "She's such a perfect character for a team like this because she's been an Avenger a number of times. She was in the regular Avengers and the Mighty Avengers. She's been on all sides of the equation and is an ex-S.H.I.E.L.D. agent and an ex-Soviet spy. You put a team like this together, and it has to have Black Widow on it because it wouldn't



make sense for her not to be. She's the girl who can go undercover," Brubaker explains.

NOVA

The last survivor of a formerly unstoppable space corps, Rich Rider may not seem like the first draft pick for an undercover squad, but

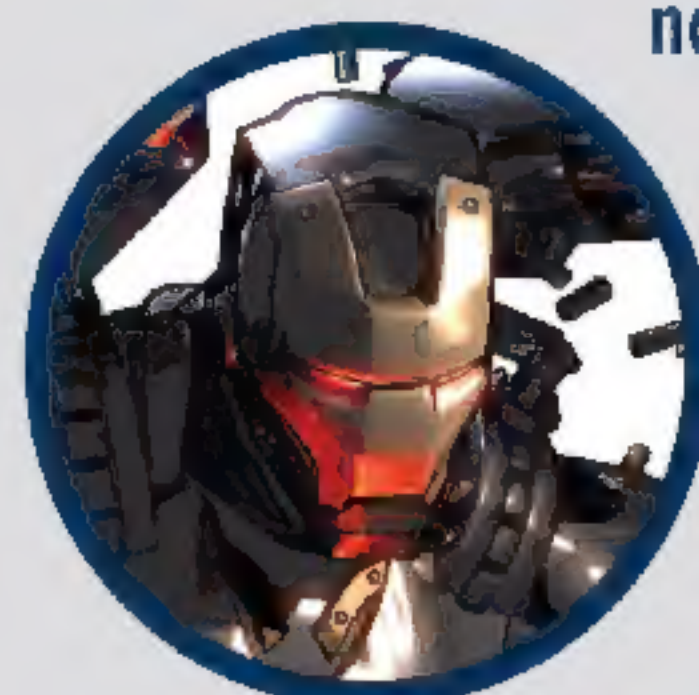


Brubaker knows what Rogers will do with Nova. "Nova's not a guy who's going to be in every issue of the book, but he's a key ingredient. There's a scene in the first issue where Steve mentions the Roxon Corporation has a dig on Mars that

he wants to send someone to look at. It's like, 'You've got someone you can send to Mars?' and he goes, 'Yeah. Sure.'"

WAR MACHINE

The biggest weapon in the Marvel U fits this team to a T because of Rogers' focus on combat-experienced super troops, says Brubaker. "If you'll notice, every



character on the team has a little bit of a military background of some sort. War Machine is ex-military and has tons of military experience. That's the one thing that ties all the characters together."



VALKYRIE

"I'm using the original version of Valkyrie — the Asgardian who Odin kicked out of Asgard because of the story of The Ring," Brubaker recalls of his warrior woman. "I like that that kind of character — someone who's totally otherworldly — is on a team like this. A lot of it was thinking of who's military-related and who makes sense on a team that goes on secret missions. Like I said, a lot of it is two or three people going off and doing a task, and a lot of it is a team where they aren't all teamed up. So having a lot of these characters makes a lot of sense."

THE IRREDEEMABLE ANT-MAN

Half villain, half spy, all jerk. The shrinking super known as the Irredeemable Ant-Man may have to change his name when Steve is done with him. "The cool



thing about this character is that he's a really flawed, messed up guy, but he does come from S.H.I.E.L.D. He's got a history with Ant-Man and the Thunderbolts, and he's the kind of guy you can imagine Steve wanting to take under his wing and say, 'If you want redemption, if you want to be a redeemed Ant-Man, you can be. But you're going to have to live up to the name and the costume.' I got to put him back in the classic Ant-Man helmet, which is the coolest look of all time."

MOON KNIGHT



As crazy as they come and as talented as any hero alive, the multiple personality Moon Knight might just keep it together for the Secret

getting in the wrong hands. That's the kind of stuff Project Pegasus works on. So part of what the Secret Avengers mission is is to find the threats before they happen — to get in there and take them out before anybody realizes they were really in danger.

That's the kind of thing Steve wants to do now. He's seen all this terrible stuff happen — he got killed and brought back to life, had to live through his entire life again without the ability to change anything — he's seen every mistake he and his friends made time and time again, and now he wants to do things differently. He wants to try to take a different tack on the world and the way he relates to it. I think that's going to be a really fun thing to see because we haven't seen him do anything like this where he's going super proactive. He won't wait around for [Marvel Universe extremist group] ULTIMATUM to strike. He'll find out ULTIMATUM has a super weapon, and then go out to take it from them and dismantle their entire organization.

KP: What is the base like? Are they riding around on a Helicarrier?

EB: It's smaller than that. It's sort of a

Avengers. "It's his mercenary/military history that comes into play here and the fact that he's got these skills — I mean, he's Moon Knight! He can blend in with the shadows and do a lot of stuff that you need on a team like this."

THE BEAST



The big, blue brains of the outfit — Brubaker was drawn to Beast from his last stint as one of Earth's Mightiest.

"He and War Machine really run the science lab on the roving headquarters," the writer explains. "That's part of why I brought him in. But also, some of my favorite stuff about Beast as a character was just after he got the fur and the blue fangs and was on the Avengers. I loved that version of Beast. I love Beast and Wonder Man going to the movies together and Beast hanging out with Hawkeye."

{ Secret Avengers }

roving headquarters in the sky that's their command/control place. They have a roving presence much in the way S.H.I.E.L.D. did, and they can go to hotspots. But really this is something that Deodato and I were talking about early on when he first signed on the book. We want this book to look and feel different than any other Avengers book. When there's action it's all out, but there's a lot of subterfuge and espionage and dark, shadowy scenes.

It very much exists in the world of the giant, super-powered espionage action. There's a super-secret organization that you'll meet in the first issue that has ties to a lot of things throughout Marvel history. It's got various branches throughout governments and corporations and things like that, and we'll be revealing their entire history in the first arc. It's going to feel more like the new James Bond movies than it will the regular Avengers in the same way people used to say *Captain America* felt like "24" except without all the torture.

KP: And Mike Deodato as an artist has really reinvented himself of late in a way that seems like a nice fit for the feel you're going for.

EB: It's like he reinvents himself for every new project. He's constantly experimenting

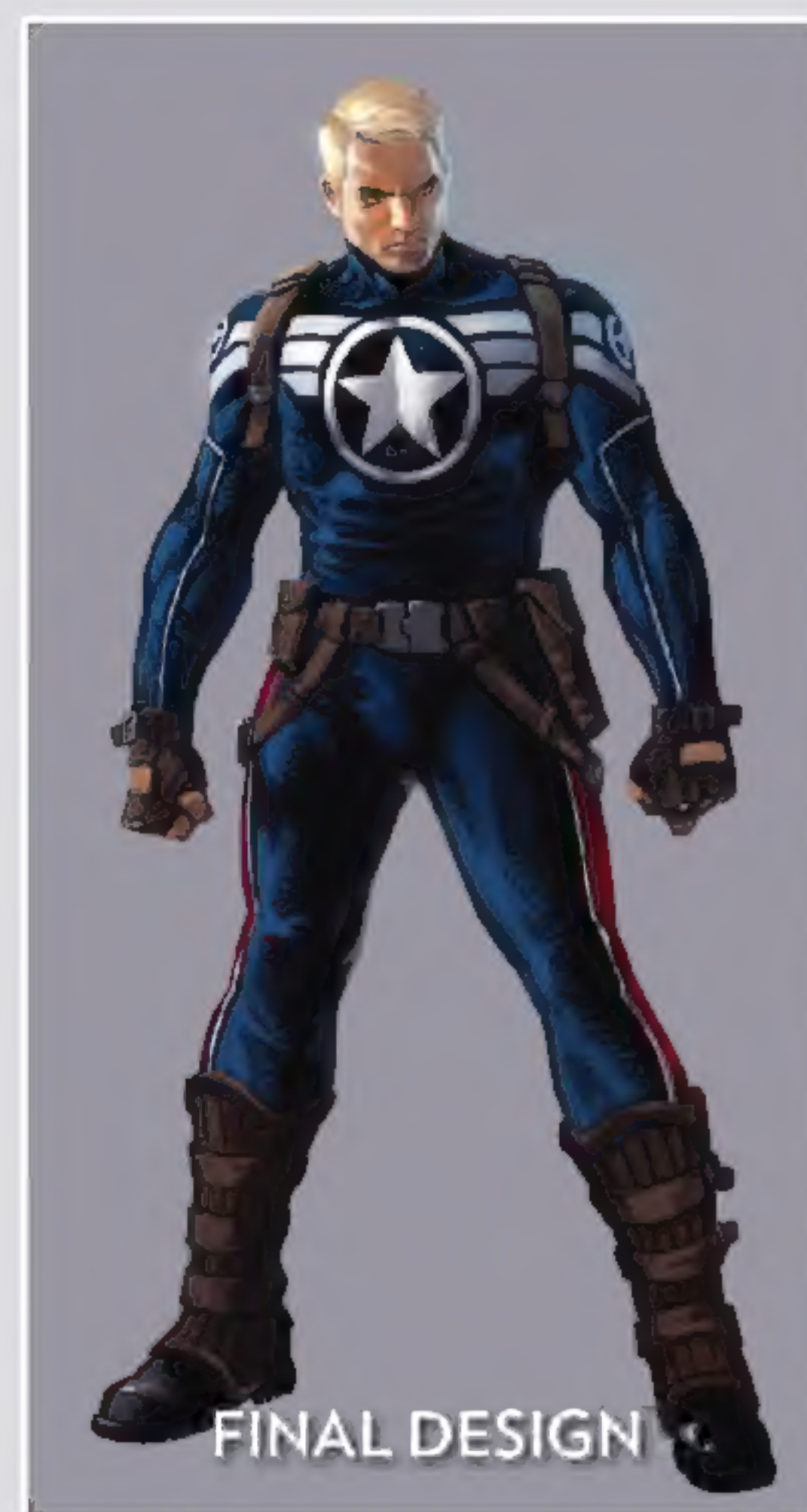
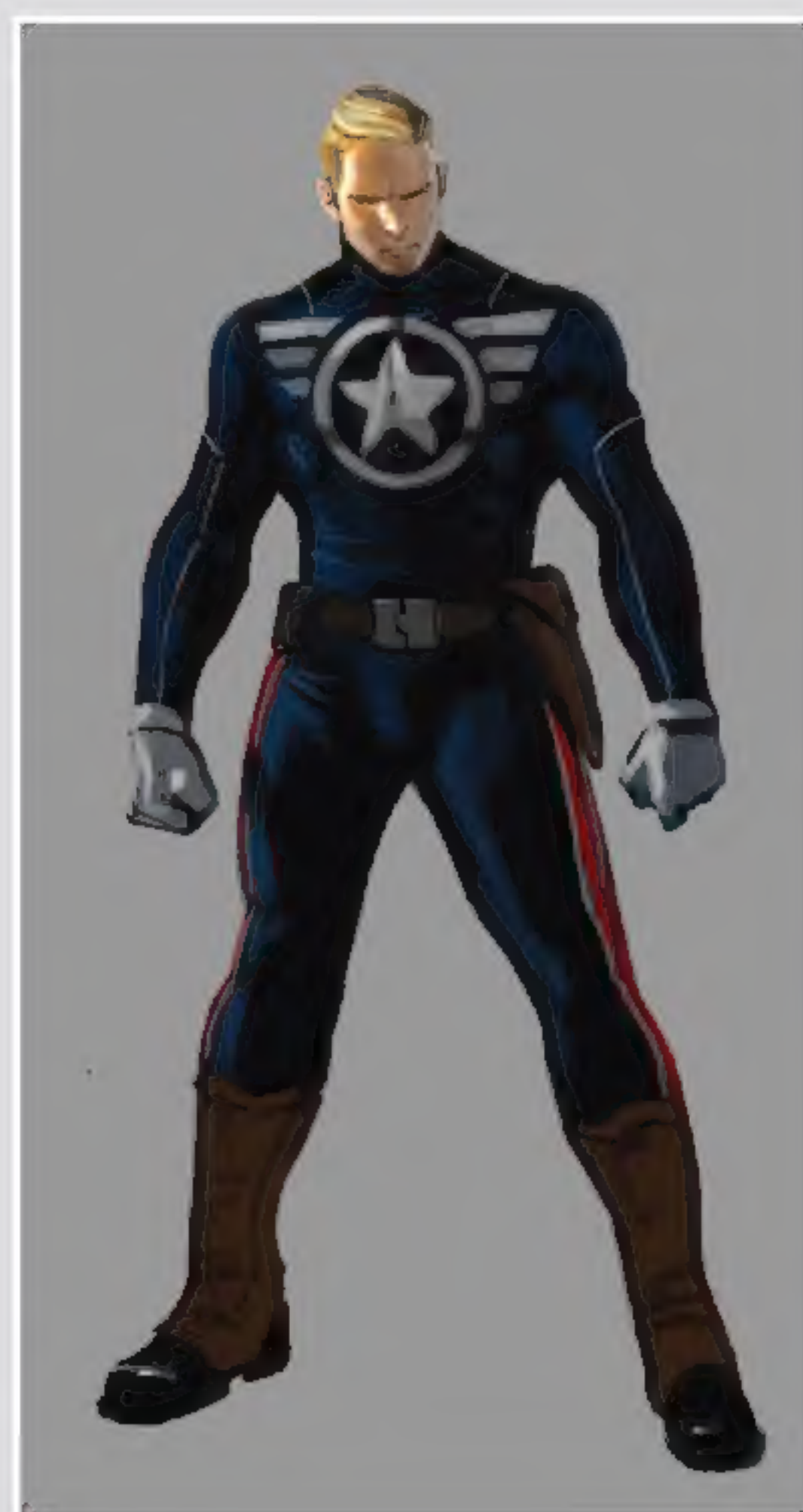
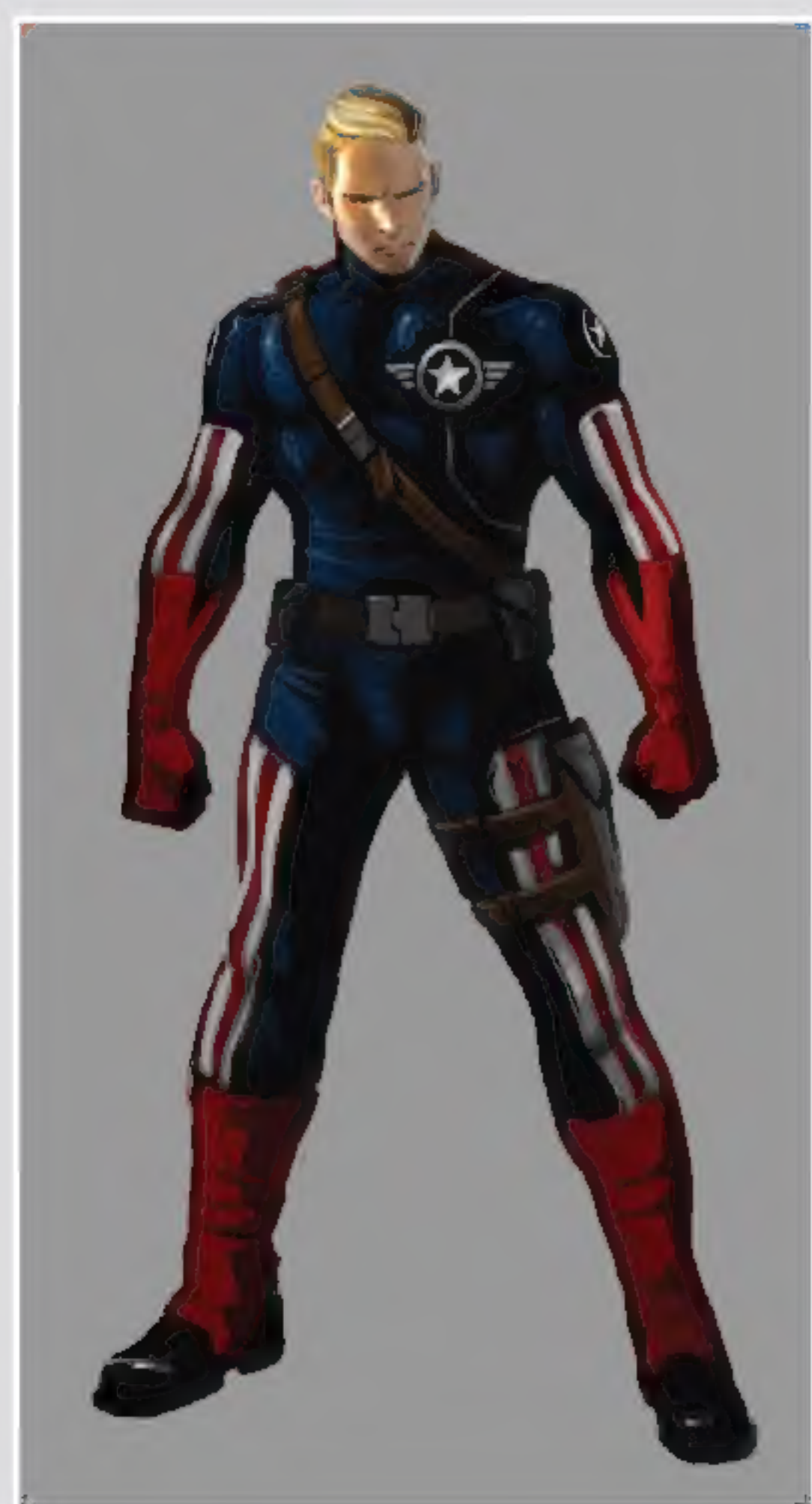
and trying different artistic techniques. That was one of the things that attracted me about him.

It's funny. When we first talked, I knew he was from South America, and I didn't know if he had access to the same comics I grew up reading. So I told him, "If you don't have some of this stuff, go get the Steranko *Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D.* stuff and these issues of *Cap* and get *Modesty Blaise* and 'Danger Diabolik.'" And then the next thing he sent back to me was some pages he scanned from this Jim Steranko science fiction graphic novel he had that I'd never heard of — an adaption of the movie "Outland" with Sean Connery. I'd never seen it before, so my response was, "Okay, we're on the same page." ■



The New American

When Steve Rogers returned from the dead, he decided to leave the mantle of Captain America with his former protégé Bucky Barnes and instead don some new threads. Here are Steve's new costume designs by Marko Djurdjevic.



STEVE ROGERS HAS A BIG SECRET!



THE FORMER CAPTAIN AMERICA HAS ASSEMBLED A SPECIAL-OPS SQUAD TO COUNTER THE WORLD'S DEADLIEST THREATS. BUT WHO ARE THE SECRET AVENGERS? SPY INTRIGUE MEETS SUPER-HERO ACTION AS THE SUPER-SOLDIER, BLACK WIDOW, WAR MACHINE, ANT-MAN, VALKYRIE, MOON KNIGHT AND MORE TAKE ON A CASE THAT CROSSES DIMENSIONS AND LANDS ON MARTIAN SOIL — AND SOMEHOW INVOLVES NICK FURY! THEN, THE CELESTIAL ORDER OF THE HAI-DAI LAUNCHES A BRAZEN ATTACK ON SHANG-CHI. ITS MISSION? TO RETURN HIM TO HIS FATHER, A MAN OF CONSUMMATE EVIL WHO HAS PERPETUATED HIS BRAND OF WICKEDNESS AND CORRUPTION FOR MORE THAN THREE THOUSAND YEARS! CAN STEVE'S STEALTH TEAM — AND AN OLD FRIEND FROM HIS WORLD WAR II DAYS — SAVE THE MASTER OF KUNG FU? ED BRUBAKER'S BLOCKBUSTER RUN IS COLLECTED IN FULL!

COLLECTING **SECRET AVENGERS (2010) #1-12** — WRITTEN BY ED BRUBAKER; AND ILLUSTRATED BY MIKE DEODATO JR., WILL CONRAD, DAVID AJA AND MICHAEL LARK.

T+

MARVEL

